SEPTEMBER 2015
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BACK COVER: Downtown Boys at Think and Die Thinking by Zev Smith-Danford

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TOP 10

For what it's worth, here're some of the MRR reviewers' current Top 10 (or so) things we've reviewed this month.

GRACE AMBROSE

CCTV – Quiet EP
VIOLENCE CREEPS – EP, flexi, live
NO FORM – 12"
NOTS – Virgin Mary/Shelf Life 7"
ANDY HUMAN AND THE REPTOIDS – LP
TROPICAL TRASH – UFO Rot LP
DREGS – cassette
SCREATURE – Four Columns LP
WHAT TYRANTS – Hanging Out in Havana/Far Out 45
GSP / SBSM / DOWNTOWN BOYS – live

LYDIA ATHANASOPOULOU

SQUATS – Noise Overdose EP
VULTURES – At Home EP / NOTS 7"
CCTV – Quiet EP
BLANK PAGES – No Reception/Golden Chains 7"
VAASKA – Todos Contra Todos LP / BLITZKRIEG – Apel EP
VERTIGO – Bajo La Sombra EP
BIRTHDAY GIRL – Peel EP
ANDY HUMAN & THE REPTOIDS – LP
QUTTINIRPAAQ – Dead September LP
SCREATURE – Four Columns LP

MATT BADENHOP

NERVOSAS – live
DOWNTOWN BOYS – live
ZERO – The Mirror/Love Ends 7"
CCTV – Quiet EP
VERTIGO – Bajo La Sombra EP
SQUATS – Noise Overdose EP
VULTURES – At Home EP
SEXFACE – Village Life EP
THE REPOSSESSED – Born. Work. Die. EP
BLACK BUG – Frozen Energy/Push You 7"

WILL BLOMQUIST

THINK AND DIE THINKING – fest
PLEISTOCENE – Pulp EP
CLOUD RAT – Qliploth LP
PUTREFACTION – Become Death EP
ACHTUNGS – Welcome to Hell LP
RATS BLOOD – Low Life LP
SQUATS – Chaos in Nijmegen EP
SCREATURE – Four Columns LP
NERVOSAS – live
SLOUCH – live

MITCH CARDWELL

CAR CRASH – Execution EP
CCTV – Quiet EP
AGGRO – EP and 7"
NOTS – Virgin Mary/Shelf Life 7"
WHAT TYRANTS – Hanging Out in Havana/Far Out 45
VIOLENCE CREEPS – EP and flexi
ACHTUNGS – Welcome to Hell LP
ANDY HUMAN AND THE REPTOIDS – LP
GOLDEN PELICANS – Oldest Ride, Longest Line LP
WINTER COFFIN – Forest of Blitzkrieg 45

ROBERT COLLINS

Somewhere in the Great White Lemon....

LAYLA GIBBON

CCTV – Quiet EP
NOTS – Virgin Mary/Shelf Life 7"
CONEHEADS – LP
VIOLENCE CREEPS – I'm Broke/Gridlock flexi / 45
BROKEN TALENT – Rules No One LP
NO FORM – 12"
ANDY HUMAN AND THE REPTOIDS – LP
ACHTUNGS – LP / TROPICAL TRASH – LP
YDI – LP / MCRAD – Lion Pure 2xLP
THEE TSUNAMIS – Saturday Night Sweetheart LP

DAN GOETZ

CCTV – Quiet EP / CONEHEADS – LP
VAASKA –Todos Contra Todos LP
HIRS – live
HARD STRIPES – Unconditional EP and live
VIOLENCE CREEPS –7" and flexi
D.A.M.E. – live
DOWNTOWN BOYS – live / CURMUDGEON – live
SHITTY FRIENDS – Crime Line EP / NOTS – 45
WARSICK – Human Filth flexi
THE REPOSSESSED – Born. Work. Die. EP

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TOP 10

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GREG HARVESTER

- CCTV – Quiet EP
- CONEHEADS – LP
- VIOLENCE CREEPS – EP and flexi
- DREGS – cassette
- UROCHROMES – cassette
- PURPLE 7 - Gulf Of The Afterglow LP
- BASEMENT BENDERS – Native Tongues EP
- PSYCHIC BAOS – EP
- BROKEN TALENT – Rules No One LP
- BUTANNA – cassette

KENNY KAOS

- SEX CRIME – live / THE OGRES – live
- RAVI SHAVI – Indecisions LP
- THEE TSUNAMIS – Saturday Night Sweetheart LP
- HEMINGERS – Q: What's a Heminger? EP
- HI-FI's – 7"
- BIKINI GORGE – Fuzztration LP
- DAN WEBB AND THE SPIDERS – Perfect Problem LP
- COBRA SKULLS – Live at the BBC EP
- ALRIGHT – Mixed Singles EP
- LOUDER – Tear Me Up/So Alone 7"

CAROLYN KEDDY

At the movies...

RAY LUJAN

- BAD COP/BAD COP – Not Sorry LP
- THEE CEE CEES – Solution Songs CD
- DOCTOR BISON – Dewhursts CD
- THE FUCK OFF AND DIES – Dear Liver CD
- INDONESIAN JUNK – Crimes EP
- BRUCE MOODY – Fresh Out! EP
- SPRAYNARD – Cut & Paste LP
- SLAUGHTER AND THE DOGS – live
- THE ATARIS – live
- DOWNTOWN BOYS – live

FRED SCHRUNK

- VIOLENCE CREEPS – On My Turf EP
- CCTV – Quiet EP
- CONEHEADS – LP
- BASEMENT BENDERS – Native Tongues EP
- NOTS – Virgin Mary/Shelf Life
- BLITZKRIEG – Apel EP
- ANDY HUMAN & THE REPTOIDS – LP
- YOUR PEST BAND – Time To Go LP
- BROKEN TALENT – Rules No One LP
- PURPLE 7 - Gulf Of The Afterglow LP

ROTTEN RON READY (New Top Ten!)

- SEXFACE – Village Life EP
- ACHTUNGS – Welcome to Hell LP
- BROKEN TALENT – Rules No One LP
- KORROSIVE – The Kaaos B Sides flexi
- CCTV – Quiet EP
- ORNERYS – Wanna Get Dead/Keep On Dancin' 7"
- PUTREFACTION – Scavenger EP
- GOLDEN PELICANS – Oldest Ride, Longest Line LP
- THEE TSUNAMIS – Saturday Night Sweetheart LP
- STUPID LIFE / FUNDAMENTAL – live on LSD

LENA TAHMASSIAN

- BROKEN TALENT – Rules No One LP
- 92 – Cenzura/Cukrarnar
- SCREATURE – Four Columns LP
- ACHTUNGS – Welcome to Hell LP
- VÉRTIGO – Bajo La Sombra EP
- VULTURES – At Home EP
- NOTS – Virgin Mary/Shelf Life 45
- PIÑÉN - live
- ARREST– live
- CANINE – live

ELI WALD

- CCTV – Quiet EP
- VIOLENCE CREEPS – EP and flexi
- NOTS – Virgin Mary/Shelf Life 45
- ANDY HUMAN & THE REPTOIDS – LP
- NO FORM – 12"
- SCREATURE – Four Columns LP
- AGGRO – EP and 45
- CONEHEADS – LP
- HARD STRIPES – Unconditional EP
- SBSM / DOWNTOWN BOYS – live

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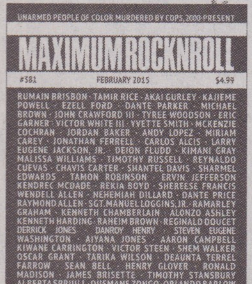
MRR BACK ISSUES AND RENEWALS

LIKE WHAT YOU'RE READING IN MRR #388? HERE'S SOME RECOMMENDED READING FROM THE MRRchive:

MRR #326/July '10. U-Ron of Really Red, Japan's Slang, Scotland's Sedition, Australia's Circle Pit, London's Trash Kit, San Francisco's High Castle, East Bay punk duo Street Eaters, Marcel Duchamp from Chile, Fla's Mehkago Nt, Random Conflict from Alabama, Michigan's Bunnyskulls, plus Calgary and **NEW ORLEANS scene reports (discover the mythic lineage of MYSTIC INANE)**, and awesome cover art by Avi Spivak of Humanbeing Lawnmower zine.

MRR #334/March '11. Extensive 2010 year-end top tens, early Bay Area anarcho punk band A State Of Mind, Useless Children and Kitchen's Floor from Australia, author Gabriel Kuhn with Sober Living for the Revolution, and **WASHINGTON, DC scene report (check out the last wave of DCHC)**. Awesome cover art by Eliza Childress.

MRR #366/Nov '13. Interviews with cover artist Halsey Swain, Scotland's Thisclose, New Orleans' Not Enough! Fest, Seattle's Nudes, L.A.'S Destruye Y Huye, Huntsville Al's Vertical House Records, Chaos Destroy, NYC's Rosa Apatrida, Räjäyttäjät, Tarantuja from Canada, **the Bay Area's PERMANENT RUIN**, and a Summer photo tour from Claudia Cebrian.

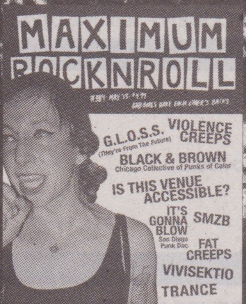


MRR #381/Feb '15. The Pacific Northwest's Hysterics, Liz Panella of Earth Girls with Scott Plant of Broken Prayer, Oslo's Dark Times, Accidente, London's Quango, Vancouver's Vacant State, Mallorca's Metadona label, Toronto's Not Dead Yet fest, **WICCANS (Denton and Austin, TX affiliates of VIDEO)**, and an Iceland scene report with Reykjavik's Börn.

RECENT BACK ISSUES: MRR's Latest and Greatest

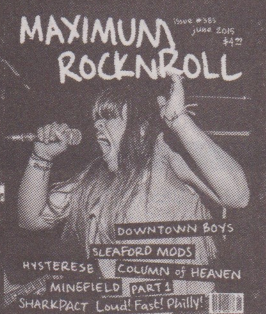
MRR #383/Apr '15

Comics and Art! Edited by Alex Simon. Featuring art by Lisa Czech, Maren Karlson, Sara Abruña, Shiva Addanki, Laura Pallmall, Nathan Ward, and many more.



MRR #384/May '15

Olympia's G.L.O.S.S., Bay Area powerhouse Violence Creeps, Spain's Trance, SMZB from China, Fat Creeps, Chicago's Black and Brown Punk Shows, the Is This Venue Accessible? website, San Diego punk doc It's Gonna Blow, and Finland's Vivisektio.



MRR #385/Jun '15

Providence's Downtown Boys, anarcho legends Part 1, Germany's Hysterese, Column Of Heaven from Toronto, England's Sleaford Mods, Russia's Minefield, Sharkpact, Loud! Fast! Philly! and photo spreads from Damaged City Fest and London's Bentfest.

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LETTERS

Send letters to MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760, or to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com. No response guaranteed.

Dear *MRR*,

I'm writing in regards to the incident involving Chokehold in Toronto. By the time this goes to print, the issue will be long gone to some or a lot more will have happened. One thing is for sure, Chokehold will have played several shows in which people have chosen to react or ignore what happened at their Toronto show. That said, I just have to get this out there…

At the most basic level, you have a person in the audience calling out someone in the band for making a racist statement. When they do not agree, the person doing the calling out gets punched. I think most of us would agree that punching someone for not agreeing with you is pretty fucking weak. But wait, there is more—and the following is just what I know of—this is a young, not sure what class, slight, white transwoman in a room full of mostly white cis people calling out an older, I believe working class, large husky white cis man. He is being called out for using the term "All Lives Matter" and saying that police brutality is "not just a black thing." Seems more complicated? Well, it is and it isn't. But on a basic level, punching someone for not agreeing with you is still ridiculous.

I have seen "punks" defending the guy in Chokehold for punching the person who called him out by saying things like, "the person speaking looked like a dude" as if this is justification for violence. Punching a dude is ok regardless of the age difference and that the size of each of these two people is vastly different? I cannot speak for transwomen, nor would I try, but I can say that the subsequent commentary on what transwomen "look like" or "behave like" is fucking embarrassing. Assuming gender is not only careless, but it is not an excuse for why someone can or cannot be a target of violence. I don't expect punks to necessarily be more enlightened than other folks, but if this band is so politically aware, why are they tolerating transphobic statements as a form of support? Was she targeted because she is trans? I cannot say, and I doubt it, but why is it that Chokehold is adamant in insisting they are not racist, yet have not acknowledged how their fans are talking about transpunks? Not only has Chokehold not apologized for striking her, they have not acknowledged that the person assaulted is a transwoman.

Why does that matter? Well, if you vehemently claim to be an "aware" band then you probably know that transwomen are disproportionately targeted by male violence even within their communities not to mention by society at large…oh wait, this sounds vaguely familiar. I am not trying to make this an oversimplified, convoluted comparison to anti-Blackness and police violence—these are serious realities that also intersect—but the lack of awareness on Chokehold's part exemplified by a singular approach revealed by the stage rant is embarrassing. On that note, punks (mostly white people) saying shit like, "they aren't racist" about Chokehold are just as guilty of this singular approach. To clarify, the woman that did the calling out said that *the statements* made by the guy in Chokehold were racist. She did not call him racist; actually, she was even polite. What Chokehold heard was not what she said. Her argument was eloquent and specific, but despite the already present power dynamics, what they heard was not about the issue or the people affected by the issue, they just made the exchange about themselves. Does this sound familiar? With all the information that is now with great effort readily out there? Do we really have to tell people that anti-Blackness is real? Racism is real? Do we have to constantly try to stop people from derailing and gaslighting? Does this sound like what White Supremacy does all day, everyday? Yes, it does.

I saw the video from This is Hardcore where the singer of Chokehold made an argument for them not being racist by citing their songs about Pro-choice and various issues—as if that is enough to prove they are not racist. Also, he accuses those who are focusing on the racism of "All Lives Matter" of treating these other issues as "antiquated." Everyone in the crowd is like, "Fuck Yeah!" and laughing. So this smokescreen is working? Not addressing the actual issue at hand, that someone was punched for disagreeing with them, that they seemingly support "All Lives Matter," that they have accepted fucked up transphobic and racist support and then to somehow try to make themselves look as if they are more political than others? Chokehold, you can try to derail the argument as much as you want, but we see you. These issues that you claim are being treated as "antiquated" are not mutually exclusive and it is not a competition. Besides that, since when can someone that is pro-choice not possibly be racist? In Chokehold's first and later retracted explanation of the events in Toronto they advised those allegedly saying they are racist to "pick up [their] lyric sheet." How long has it been since they picked up a lyric sheet? It seems to me that Chokehold is not actively fighting racism rather just actively trying to prove they aren't racist. We can get into their white tears, but this is not really about them so much as it is about the punk scene in general and its history of casual use of "causes" to elevate individual status. Wash away that guilt while inversely weakening the causes they seek to support, ignoring intersections and ultimately perpetuating the oppression. You follow?

I've seen people asking why the show wasn't stopped or why Chokehold didn't get their asses kicked. I wasn't there but it seems like the scene was volatile and that de-escalation was probably the best move. In the audio, someone in Chokehold says, "If I see that dude back in here, I will kill him." As unpopular as it may be, I do believe that sometimes people need to get their ass kicked. My problem with punks automatically jumping to violence is that we can't win every fight. In Chicago when a gangbanger showed up to a show and started acting foolish and even violent, violence was not a viable option to counter that. I know it's a different situation, but that is my point exactly—it's not just the venue that is responsible, it is the people in your scene. I have often experienced bands being arbiters when violence occurs at a show, but in this case it is a self-proclaimed politically aware band that everyone knows well in this sister city that ends up being the source of the problem. Putting the responsibility on the person assaulted is wrong. Putting the sole responsibility on the few people working the show is wrong. It is a community effort to take out the trash or at least figure out what level of accountability and information is needed—or even stop the show. The cops are not an option, so how about coming up with our own options besides beating and getting beaten?

The fact that people are giving Chokehold so much time and space is really obnoxious—all the effort put into them to make right. All this effort to change the minds or at least shitty behaviors of people who claim to know how fucked up the system is. Is it worth it? I suppose you could say that I am doing the same, but what I am really afraid of is that a band that many of us would seemingly connect with sonically and based on their ideological approach to certain issues (according to their songs) could easily become the poster child for something sinister. I live here, I am a hardcore lover/supporter/bandmate/historian/collector, just as the person who called them out at the show is and those who are calling them out now are. We have already seen rampant transphobia and sexism in Chokehold's defense. I do not think it is outlandish to say that they could be a beacon for the "anti-PC" ding-dongs in punk, including those who are White Power. Does that sound extreme? It's not. Boys, if it happened to Ian MacKaye, it can happen to you.

When it comes down to it, if POC punks and their allies are telling you that what you are saying is racist, you should listen. If transpunks and their allies are telling you that what you are saying is transphobic, you should listen. If you don't agree, then you do not have the right to sing about these issues on anyone's behalf. At least stop punching people who are more aware than you for disagreeing with your ideology. More than likely everyone will forgive Chokehold, but they have it easy if this is the most experience they have encountered in not being heard, being misunderstood, being silenced. Maybe they will listen next time, maybe they won't if it's not from a source that looks like an authority to them. Chokehold, the fight didn't start with you and it will not end with you, but do you really want to become part of the problem? Some people will take an apology and maybe if you were to actually take a stand against the transphobic, sexist, and racist shit your supporters are saying, some will forgive you. These are situations you have the luxury of dealing with or not dealing with. For those of us directly affected by the issues you so readily condemn and casually use in your lyrics, this is real life and you are taking our humanity out of it. It is a hard road for us and yet we are still here, we are punks, we love hardcore. I shouldn't even tell you this, but that is where you can start, with your privilege. We know it's complicated, I bet your lives have inextricable intersections too (see paragraph two), which makes shit hard to deconstruct and understand. Start with your privilege, abandon some of that ego, make connections. Then maybe some of those lyrics you told all of us to read as proof of how politically on top you are will start to mean something again. It won't be easy, but you know how it is, "This is not a game and it's not for the weak." But we already know that, don't we?

One Love,

Mariam

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COLUMNS

BRACE BELDEN is THE LAST PUNK

"What a long, strange trip it's been."
—Adolf Eichmann, in a telegram to Himmler, 1943

How right this dead Eichmann was! I've not a doubt that on June 1st 1962, when that sallow little creep was gazing upon man's greatest invention, the gallows, his chicken-farmer mind returned to dwell upon those same words. What a long, strange trip it's been, oh yes. In the final analysis—insufferably long, terrifyingly strange! Yet, here I am, alive, yes, hale, healthy (not so like the hanged man Eichmann here!) but occupied so often with curses meant for God's ears at not having me killed in the womb. But oh, what a time for breathing, what a time for checking your pulse and praying aloud! Thank God I was not complicit in mass genocide! Thank God my victims have faces & names!

But let's not mind *them*. This column is, like all that I've ever written, strictly about *me*. Me! I'm back writing for *MRR*. *MRR*, a magazine founded by a tyrannical Stalinist, now ruled by a *junta*-of-two, both of them Ivy League graduates. The nerve of these bourgeois intellectuals! But my sense are heightened, I feel a moistness in the air, like when you got your nose in a hot crotch. Things are different now! All the unpaid workers & tired-eyed *kapos* shuffle around, stinking of desperation & apocalypse, they all wear different screenprinted t-shirts, the piercings are in different, though still absurd, places. Me? I smell of rosewater & Tide; my body is pure, an ivory temple meant for my worship alone; my penis is a white obelisk which sends and receives electricity from God.

And now that I'm such a grown man, so many things about punk that used to make sense now seem so petty & childish (the wrong kind of childish) to me. I stalk through a crowd and wonder: What is a hardcore show but a gutter-trough filled with bickering pissants? I think of my friends: Tattooed children sitting around miserable in their little holes, wailing about this & that. Then, as always, I think of myself: A man. I can't abide by kids' rules! Observe the wretches performing stud-counts on each other's leather jackets, looking like nothing less than chimpanzees picking out & eating lice off their mate's backs. What bizarre rituals, what a strange, ugly culture!

But, here, you ask (you haven't), you demand (why would you?) to know: Where have *I* been? You haven't seeen me at shows; my presence, though not at all missed, hasn't been felt by anyone unlucky enough to get cornered by me in the bathroom of the Knockout. Where have *I* been? I'll tell you, you pig! I've been shooting crazed dogs in Angola, remaking myself with the French Foreign Legion. I've been summering in Antwerp and flossing my teeth with the plucked pubes of fat & jowled noblemen. I've been mostly jerking off. At night I milk my wife. I've been taking nitrous oxide canisters to Phil Lesh & Friends shows, and making real money off of $5 hits. I've collected blowjobs from hairy motherfuckers capped with Stetsons, tickling that little funny bone above my cock with their droopy fucking mustaches. Shit.

In truth I'm now insane, and have so damaged my faculties that here I am, stuck once more, writing, a slave, once more a goiter on the neck of *MRR*.

Now, what thoughts go through the Last Punk's head as he kneels before the keyboard & sucks his thumb? All the past erections of my life. Will I ever be able to send cum through e-mail? Take a shit & wipe your ass with crumpled up copies of *Slug & Lettuce*. What is this garbage I'm writing? Is it true that I ran out of ideas four years ago, that, as they say, I've simply been coughing up nothing but a cloud of black diesel ever since I first began, and since black is black, since it's all the same fucking hue, because it all smells like gasoline, then what does it matter the quality of the oil? In short: I have to offer nothing of value, I give no truths or revelations. What you're witnessing is the pathetic madness of a petulant creep!

But how I wish you could see my fucking dreams! Witness Jewish strongmen, with veins demarcating the worlds of muscle straining against their skin, their members encased in the clay and stone cunts of golem-women. Christ's name being dragged through the dirt. Lenin's will ceding control of the Politburo to Trotsky. Cocks bit off by surly whores, and black spew coming out of my own member instead of the usual pearled ejaculate. Fuck! The dizzying brew of wonder and terror such dreams cook up, it's no wonder my soul & body alike are impotent! I look down: My penis has become an old oak tree, gnarled, with knots of root pimpling its shaft, and it's all wet and glistening from the lubrication by my tears. I look inwards: There's just lesions on lengths of rotting gut.

But here! Listen! Maybe it's not to late. I can scrape together some linear writings, I swear it.

I thought, I could have sworn, that all things are either black or white. I thought, we have choices! You might spend your time twisted up in the dizzying net of identity politics, where you can be a star, where you know if someone dares blows breath near the flame of your candle, if someone causes so much as a flicker of you bright Very Light life, you can shriek at them: Cur! Nazi! Woman-killer! Kicker of dogs! And on the other side? The cretin fedora-Gestapo, those half-men in late-period GG Allin shirts, those who waste their days looking at pictures of shirtless sub-Neanderthals like themselves on the internet. These miserable creatures need to be put in check—first by words, then, when tides turn as they always do, by the barrel of a gun. But that's not the worst of it; the worst of it is *we have no black and white, yet we have no nuance either*! The choice is this: black or black! Ugly or vile! Stupid or dim! What kind of man would I be if I were not frozen here, rooted to the spot by this horrible knowledge!

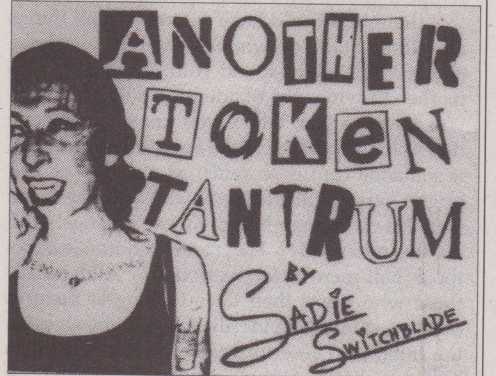
And don't you take this as a screed against extremists. I am an extremist; I believe the Red Brigades were right, Free Leonard Peltier, up against the wall you pig-dog lickspittles hugging capitals boot!

And it's through this nightmare I've come stumbling back, my ankles all torn up, turned into gory white sticks from the constant nipping and occasional bites from those phantom chihuahas that yap through the night. Now those pups have twisted themselves into wild dogs, but it's too late, I'm stuck here once more and I'm too nuts about getting famous to let a little thing like my inevitable public shaming get in the way. It's like…it's like if you wake up, from a long, deep sleep, when, before your senses can fall into coherence and you're not yet oriented with the world or your relation to it, you terrify yourself by seeing all your lamps and books and girlfriend and pet cat as vicious, hungry bearded women and loose pederast snake-handlers. This must be a circus; I must be a clown!

There's only one solution: Grate them all up into woodchips, then shovel, yes, shovel them into the furnace! Burn all which does not resemble you. Become the ugly little woman's dog that bites the finger off the neighbor's petulant child, and is later in the day put down by City Workers. Thing this: I *am* the sex-worker, the midnight jack-off, the sleepy terror. If you're in an alley, you must know with complete assurance that you are the worst thing there, that no rapist, no rat-faced thief, no poisonous spider is more of a danger than you. Be always smart & sharp in your applications of terror. Thuggish brutality

is a thing for skinheads and the illiterate; be cunning & terrible, but never a fool!

Here is my list of things to abolish: Neo-folk (retarded cretins addicted to the internet), beer-drinkers, the septum-pierced, ugly craven white men with shoelaces wrapped round their heads (fucking bumblers, born butter but degraded into margarine, and then from margarine to rotten lard), all men, shoe collectors, Anarchists, bicyclists, record labels, punk bands, *Maximum Rocknroll*. And above all else—me me me me me me (wails the petulant baby-Jew Brace, wrapped in a diaper-like sarong, thrashing around on his back & kicking his freshly-shaven legs into the air) me me me me me!



First, an update: I did *not* get to keep my testicles! I begged them not to go. I begged them, I pleaded, just like the protagonist of that DASHBOARD CONFESSIONAL song, but the nurses weren't having it. The nurses were sweethearts, though, definitely. And I did convince one of them at least to *show* me my severed Poison Plums, which were floating in red ooze inside two plastic canisters, like featureless, embryonic fetal pigs. I haven't wept that hard in a long time, to be honest. I'm sure part of it was that I had just woken up from the knockout juice they'd hooked to my veins. But it was an unparalleled relief to seeing those little bitches captured and killed.

When you wake up from intravenous anesthesia your inhibitions are, let's say, compromised. I overheard a nurse refer to me as "he" and I threatened to remove my IV and slap him in the face! I also said "This is a huge weight off my penis." I accused the surgeon, who wasn't there when I woke up, of having audaciously overcharged me so that she could build a saltwater swimming pool inside her millionaire's compound. Really though, the nurses were very kind and Dr. Bowers was a great surgeon. When she inspected my junk the day before the operation she just like, grabbed my shit and said "Yep, those are the Bad Guys." Ha! Love it. And it's cool that she's a trans woman performing these surgeries on other trans women.

Now that those life-ruiners are out of my system I feel a lot more calm, peaceful, and generally unburdened, like I'm no longer gazing at everything through a testosterone haze. I feel like myself. It's so nice! I try not to think about how different my life would be if I had done this two decades ago when I was nine, as that sort of thought is an trap easy to fall into as a trans person, and I'm not gonna go there right now.

Unfortunately, I go instead to gay marriage, because I can't stop thinking about it. By this point, you have probably read about transgender-immigrant activist Jennicet Gutiérrez interrupting Obama's bullshit LGB luncheon only to get shouted down by a bunch of white, cis, gay norms who shushed her and told her "This is not for you." Of course it's not for her. LGB politics have never been for people like her, even though trans women of color are the ones who started the riots—cop-car smashing *riots*, not candlelight vigils, not peaceful protests—that set the stage for these boring fucks to get married. I was infuriated as I watched this brave woman silenced by the very people whose political platform exists only because trans women like her stood up and fought back.

The desire of queers to get married is unnatural and has been planted in us by norms in order to assimilate us into their bullshit society, to declaw us, and to neutralize our threatening nature. "Gay culture" has been subsumed into hetero culture entirely: there are cops, banks, and straight people in the fucking pride parade.

The spirit of Sylvia Rivera lives on in Jennicet Gutiérrez. This isn't progress, this is full on regression, an agenda so single-minded and compromised that it has infantilized all of us. Where we once hurled rocks and high-heels at our oppressors, we now mutter sheepish pleas for sympathy and "rights." We owe it to our foremothers, and to ourselves, to weaponize our anger and to burn shit to the ground. We want liberation, not assimilation! When the fuck did we trade in our radical history for tolerance and lip service from a bunch of elitist liberals and guilt-wracked do-gooders? Marriage is a tool of the state that will never, ever set the stage for our freedom. Fuck every single pathetic salmon-shorts-wearing gay-married shitbag. You only have your marriage because you bumped the T off LGB in order to get your horseshit legislation passed.

As Yasmin Nair pointed out in her recent essay "The Secret History of Gay Marriage," gay marriage as a political campaign has never been about equality. "The mid '90s onwards saw the rise of out gay men and women, mostly men and mostly white, who were powerful and wealthy and wanted a way to ensure that their aspirations to be seen as just like everyone else would be fulfilled and that their wealth would stay in their families and continue to enrich the financial interests they had so carefully nurtured. The secret history of gay marriage is that it has never been about 'equality' in any real sense, but about ensuring that a small section of gay men and women are able to hold on to their wealth." She goes on to write that "[gay marriage's] victory enables the cementing of a neoliberal society where only private relationships can ensure access to economic security and healthcare."

And yet despite vitriolic dissent within the "community" (LOL) over gay marriage, there are still "straight allies" with their rainbow flags and Macklemore anthems, who run their mouths about how "we did this" and "the fight is over." You didn't fight for shit; you don't know shit about the things that queer people go through. It is not your fight; your opinion is void. Shut up. Go away. If this is support, I don't want it. Go back to watching *Transparent* and making up stories about us and LEAVE US ALONE. The backlash from gay marriage is going to fucking blow and you can safely assume that the brunt of the violence is going to come down on black and brown queers, trans women, visibly queer people and people without the privilege or the means to protect themselves from the system that protects elite cis white gays. So I have to ask, while we patrol our towns with bats and tasers as we look for reported racist homophobes, will you "straight allies" be there too? When our families abuse us and the TERF-run shelters reject us, will you be there too? When we're trapped in survival sex work in order to afford the necessary medical procedures society denied us by society, will you be there too? When we're outed in public and shoved to the ground, assaulted with fists and names like "tranny faggot Bruce Jenner shemales," will you be there too? When we cut our legs to manage the sorrow, will you be there too? When we're stretched thin as we care for each other, our homeless, our elders, and our mentally ill, who suffer so deeply from neglect, will you be there too? When it's not glamorous or fun, when it's painful and impossible and wretched every day, when there's no parade but the endless parade of dead friends, anxious encounters, and lost battles, will you be there, too? Or will you do shots from a rainbow-colored shot glass, vote for a gay president, and tokenize your one trans friend?

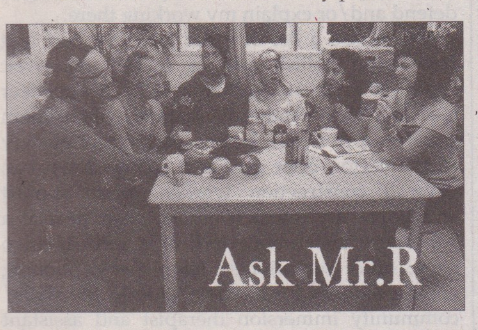
Fuck marriage, anyway. Marriage and default monogamy are weapons society uses to limit the scope of our love, because queer love is powerful and dangerous and anti-capitalist. Fuck the pressure to marry and to have your relationship recognized by the state. *Why are gays and lesbians wasting our fucking time with this shit*?! At least ten trans women of color have been murdered so far this year. Forty percent of all homeless youth are queer. Many of them commit suicide because the world has utterly failed them. Transgender people can still be fired in most states for being trans (and good luck getting hired anywhere in the first place). Trans women ICE detainees are held in men's camps, and in most states you can kill a trans person and claim "gay panic" as a legitimate legal defense. Walking down the street as a trans woman is a fucking health hazard. Many trans women, including me, incur extreme anxiety and panic due to PTSD and fear of violence, yet *we are the ones* who are prescribed medication. How about *society* prescribes itself a *fucking bullet in the head?* That would really cure my anxiety. But I guess Caitlyn Jenner's got her *Vanity Fair* cover and that's the most we should hope for. Everyone else can just give up on being alive and can wait for The Arc Of Progress To Bend Toward Justice or whatever.

In all of this, the part that rips me up the most is that I can't stop thinking about the trans women of color who have lost their lives this year, who brutally lose their lives every year. I can't stop thinking about the brown trans woman at the homeless shelter where I work who recounts to me how she is daily harassed, threatened, and abused. I can't stop thinking about the trans women in men's prisons and men's detainment centers, the queer prisoner who wrote to me, "My identity ain't reflected anywhere except in all the pools of blood I've spilled and seen spilled," the trans women who can't access healthcare, support, or love. Trans women die alone at best, encircled by our assailants at worst. Even in queer communities, in these corners we've fought so hard to hold for ourselves, the loneliness of being

a trans woman can be excruciating.

This column is supposed to focus on music, but I just can't keep it on target this month. Listen to the SLOUCH cassette *Toxic Bitch* if you're trying to mosh in your living room to some demented queer-powered hardcore. And if you can find it, the new self-titled HENS TEETH cassette is an evocative transmission of dark, melodic punk, laced with cosmic loneliness. Each time I put it in the deck I feel like I've discovered something truly special and secret, a haunted artifact with overwhelming healing properties. It's helped me cope with all the bullshit this month.

Take care of each other and stay punk.



I don't think anyone should take advice, but the punks have things to talk about, and we might as well do it here. Think of it as more of an opinion column. If we need a tagline, I hope it can be something vague such as: "A column for people who are intrigued by the subtle differences between the 'punks' and the 'punx.'"

Text a question to 510-585-HELP (510-585-4357)! Apparently, you can also call that number and leave a message like a weirdo. If you send an email, your boss might think you're working, though: askmrr@mail.com. Oh, and P.S., if you send a time-sensitive question, just let me know for a timely response!

Dear Mr. R,

How does one move through spaces and not tokenize minorities? Trying to be an ally, getting criticized. Trying to remember my privilege, but it feels like no matter what I say or do, someone thinks I'm doing it wrong.

—White Privilege Man

It seems like the first way out of this scenario is not to worry so much about your own idea of what constitutes a good or bad ally, and, instead, to actually listen to what other people say about *their perceptions* of your speech and behavior. Even when you try to remember your privilege, a huge difference exists between the *intent* of a statement and its actual *impact* on those who hear it. You know, like how Louis CK has that bit about how he misses being able to use the word "fag," because it was such a great insult, and how he doesn't think of it as meaning "gay." Pretty much everyone has accepted Louis CK as a comic who's "on our side" or whatever, but come on, all he did was validate the use of that word by every D.B. who heard him say that shit.

Of course, when you only interpret feedback as criticism, it's easy to want to shut a person down, or to think of ways to back up your own argument without listening to theirs first. But to truly align yourself with a group as an ally, and thus to ensure your right to wear a cool Aus Rotten patch on your vest, you also have to participate in the hard, boring, and self-reflective parts of support. Fun fact: It isn't actually up to you to decide what makes a good ally. So, not only do you have to listen, you have to take different views and needs into account, and remain open to re-examination of things you thought you had figured out. It's a process. And tons of people have different ideas and different needs. You can't cancel out any of them, even if you can claim to have a Black/trans/gay/female friend to validate your careless statement.

People can always decide that others are just overly sensitive these days, or can use whatever other excuse in order not to think for five minutes about issues other people are forced to deal with their entire lives. When that is the position they choose to take, may I be the first to say to them, no, you cannot come to the parade, and could you please stop, because you sound like an asshole

Mr. R,

Here's a question for ya. Why is it that every time I pick my nose it's full again in a few minutes?!?!?!? But seriously, how is it that I have been a poseur in the punk scene for *nineteen years*??? Usually you're a poseur for a little bit, and then you wise up and you're legit, or you realize what the scene is all about and then jump ship. And here's another question, why have people *let* me be a poser in the punk scene for this long? Shouldn't they be helping to wise up the un-wisened-up? And my last question, do I *have* to read *MRR* to not be a poseur or can I just figure it out on the internet since that has been invented since I first started going to shows?

—Poseur Exposer

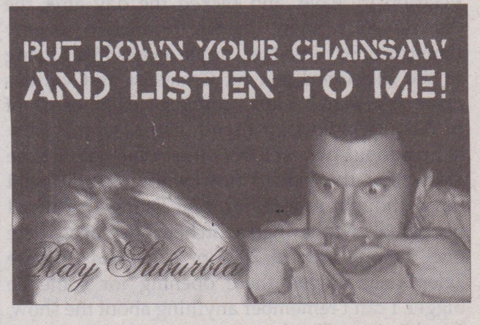
This is the questioniest question I have ever received, and even though it is clearly a joke, I would, as usual, like to offer it far too serious an answer. The actual root of what we consider here seems to be: What is the responsibility of older punks to be patient teachers of younger punks, or of new-in-general punks? How and why am I perceiving you as a poseur, and what eventually changes my attitude? While I will not deny the existence of poseurs at large, mostly all we really evaluate is the person's lack of experience and knowledge in and of the punk scene. Our judgment thereafter is based around whether we think the newbie in question truly desires and deserves the blessing of our "legit" punk status. Proverbial merit badges are earned by show attendance, bands started, musical knowledge, and general around-ness/coolness ("What are you like?/Who do you know?/Am I just used to seeing your face?").

I will say that during this *routine* process some great people find the punk scene to be just as alienating as the high schools that sent them on this path in the first place, and they quickly "jump ship," as you say. Can you believe it? From the perspective of a person who doesn't always like people right away, and who currently has little time to invest in long-term, already established friendships, let alone new, sympathy-based ones, please don't think I condone hanging out with anyone you don't want to, regardless of their punk standing. It's not an older punk's job to bake a loaf of welcome bread for every new person they see at the show, just like it's not a younger person's job to treat an old-timey punk like they're somebody special, just because they were in a band everyone loved a hundred years ago.

I do, however, think we should always be conscious of the needs of the people in our scene. We must make sure shows and punk spaces are accessible to all people, for example: not always play bar shows, so that all ages can attend; make shows affordable, so no one is turned away for lack of funds, etc. Try to remember one more thing: give that awkward new guy a head nod. It might make a difference. No big deal.

Straggler answers to this question: 1) Having to remove booger after booger from your nose is just another way you're being forced into the system (i. e. birth, school, Metallica, death). Let it remind you that you are alive. 2) I'm pretty sure *MRR* is on the internet too, so you don't even have to choose between those two options (maximumrocknroll.com).

Text questions to 510-585-HELP. Tell your grandpa he can still send emails to askmrr@mail.com.



"I hate my fucking job. I hate my fucking job. Whoa-oh-oh-oh-oh-oh-oh-oh-oh."
—M.O.T.O, "I Hate My Fucking Job"

"We are the cashiers. We are the delivery boys. We're not ashamed. We've got a life and we live it."
—The Copyrights, "Cashiers"

I have a love/hate relationship with my current job. To be clear, when I refer to my "job" I'm referring to the work I do for someone else in exchange for money. Writing this column isn't a job. Editing *No Friends* isn't a job, booking shows isn't a job, being in Autonomy isn't a job. I was cleaning the kitchen with one of my co-workers before I left for tour and we had a semantic/philosophical argument about what "work" is. He's in his mid/late 40s. Colombian immigrant, but has lived most of his life in Chicago since moving there in the late '70s. Married, father of four. The funny thing is, as completely different as our lived experiences have been, we have an incredibly similar disposition and outlook when it comes to work. So while wrapping third pans, pulling mats, and wiping down stainless steel we came to a consensus about the nature of working.

To define our terms: A job is something you do for someone else in exchange for money. Work is something you do because it needs to be done. Labor is something you do because you love it.

All those things involved energy—both physical, and mental—and time. They often feel the same because someone else's labor can be your job. Sometimes work is a job. It all gets fuzzy, but it's much easier to get through a day on the clock when you can think about the differences.

So back to my current job. Depending on the moment you ask me about it, I either love it or

hate it. It's not difficult work. I'm a line cook in the semi-busy kitchen of a bar/music venue that has recently opened a microbrewery. It's a business that's been around for about a decade, and is a pretty efficiently run establishment. To be honest, the management and ownership is probably the most professional I've ever worked with, and they treat me better than any place I have ever worked at before. That's including the restaurants that I've helped open myself. I get free food—not just a shift meal, as much free food (within moderation) as I want while on the clock and to take home. I get a free drink per shift and 50% off at the bar on everything except top-shelf liquor. I'm currently writing this column in a van, on tour, somewhere between Kansas City and Denver—so they also let me take off three weeks of work without so much as blinking an eye. I really have to take a step back sometimes and realize that, damn, this is a pretty sweet gig I landed.

I pretty much got this job before I even moved back to Chicago from the Bay. I had made the decision to leave, and picked the day after the Ausmuteants show in San Francisco as my departure. So those last couple weeks I was living in the Mission, I just hit Craigslist and various other job search sites. Nothing really came of it. But my childhood friend, Chris, who is now sitting about two feet from me in the van, let me know that the place I now work was hiring. I never thought to look for their listings because I never realized they had a kitchen. I had been there once before, around 2006 or so, when Chinese Telephones played there opening for someone bigger. I can't remember anything about the show, but I do remember hanging out in the green room (because they have a whole fucking upstairs apartment for the bands) with Marc Ruvolo...and Chris. Funny how that shit works out.

Anyway, I sent off my resume, and within a day got a response from the chef. I may be weird, awkward, and kind of an asshole, but one thing I'm solid at is cooking. I told him I was moving in a few weeks, which turned out to be great, because the job wasn't immediately available as they were finishing a near million-dollar kitchen remodel.

You read that right. $1,000,000.

And so this is where it gets weird for me with my job.

They treat me well. I work with people who, besides having somewhat off-color humor and occasionally backwards ideas about how things should be, are fair, decent, and genuinely good-hearted people. Also, the business is owned and run by punks. Sounds pretty rad, right? Here's the thing though: so often, when you live your life in the very DIY/politically radical corner of punk you often forget how big and vast punk really is. You forget about the many, many other parallel universes of punk that are filled with people so utterly confusing to you that you would never even think to consider them punks at all.

Yet there they are. Self-proclaimed punks. Whether you like them or not. And who the hell am I to tell someone they're not who they say they are? You'd have to be an asshole of the highest and most refined caliber to start trying suss out the Rachel Dolezals of punk.

And the problem with these punks, specifically the one's I work for/with, is that they're capitalist punks. Not in the, "Oh-no-you-signed-to-Hardly-Art-which-is-a-subsidary-of-Sub-Pop-which-is-partially-owned-by-a-major-label-you-money-grubbing-poseur" way. I'm talking in the having a day job trading on the Board in Chicago on futures and owning property worldwide and flipping it, and having personal assistants to pay your bills and taxes because you're too busy trying to make more money that you can't be bothered to sort out the money you already have. You know, retiring from your "day job" at 40 cause you've got multi-millions in the bank, and just focusing on your not-yet-profitable bar/venue/microbrewery.

Did I mention that my bosses also have a "punk" music festival that they throw every year? It's a pretty big deal, and draws thousands of people from all over the country and world. They have been a center point of a long-running debate about gentrification in Chicago, especially in the neighborhood where they've been doing the current, large, outdoor version of the festival. In fact, just this year a grassroots neighborhood campaign actually got the local alderman to deny the festival the permits necessary to have the space in the local park. A victory to some, an annoyance and conflation of issues within the conversation of gentrification to others. You've probably heard of it. Its name rhymes with Diet Fest.

The festival has become a symbolic manifestation of the idea of gentrification of historically working class, POC, neighborhoods in the city. But at the same time, the festival organizers have done things such as specifically hire local residents (often times gang members, drug users, and other marginalized people that are all but "unemployable" to most of the world), involve themselves in the local community by doing food drives, Thanksgiving turkey handouts, and even going so far as to pay the back taxes on a local community centers that would have had to shutter if not for their donations. Ironically, some of the grassroots organizing against the festival came out of a community center that they saved from closing.

So the love/hate thing for me is very real. As a business, I'm genuinely often startled as to how well they treat their employees. The fact that the owner has more money than he knows what to do with and is a genuinely good person allows the business to take care of their employees in a way that smaller ones simply cannot afford to do—economically or socially. But at the same time, the money I make for these people is being funneled back into some things that I don't necessarily agree with. It's confusing.

But then again I think of all the shitty, terrible jobs I've had. The ridiculous jobs doing bullshit for assholes. I may be working for a guy who *loves* to make money, who has a definite hand—if only tangentally—in socio-political issues that bother the fuck out of me.

But I'm not working for Starbucks. Or Walmart.

I'm working for a local, independent business, one that even when stumbling around the city of Chicago from park to park like a giant, mohawked Baby Huey, is trying to do their best to give people solid work, with solid pay, and treat them well...all while making as much money for themselves as they can. It ain't pretty, but it makes sense. And it's all a pretty fair deal.

I've been thinking a lot about all the jobs I've had in the past, and I've realized, startling me, that my current job is the best one I've ever had. The more noble and "punk" jobs I've had have often fucked me over completely. Sometimes because of naiveté, or ignorance. Sometimes completely taking advantage of me because, "Hey, we're punks, right? So, you get it, that I can't pay you again this week. But don't worry about it, we're cool!" The straightest jobs I've had have often just treated me like nothing more than an extra pair of hands, but paid me on time and in full. This current job has been giving me the best of both. But yet, I feel weird about it. Especially when talking to other radical, DIY, politically-minded punks in Chicago. Not ashamed to work there, but feeling like I'm often on my heels, having to defend and/or explain my working there.

But here's a list of other jobs I've had that have been hellish and/or fucked me over: caddy at a private golf course, head appetizer chef at a Thai restaurant, summer weight room supervisor at a high school, parking lot grocery cart collector, door guy at a college town bar, drywall construction worker, preservationist at a university research library, head cook at a Taiwanese restaurant, clerk at a record/video store, office receptionist, telephone captioning cubicle monkey for the deaf/elderly, life skills/community immersion therapist and assistant for a 24-hour live-in head injury care facility, stock clerk at Steve Madden shoes, cashier at a Christian version of Spencer's Gifts in a mall, bookseller, venue booker.

I could throw in coordinator of this rag—but it wasn't really a job. Most definitely a labor. Though it did pay me better than any job I've ever had, and probably ever will have.

So as I sit here writing this on tour, far, far away from my station in the kitchen I have to wonder if I really have a shitty job at all? Or is the job shit, and because I'm 33 I'm trying to figure out ways to rationalize stuff that I would have probably written a polemic about in my zine ten years ago? It's weird to think about. My lifestyle hasn't changed much, if at all, in the past fifteen or so years, so it's not like I actually need more money now than before. I suppose these days, if I'm going to have a job, it might as well be one that I doesn't make me completely fucking miserable. And isn't for some shitty, greasy, corporation. Maybe one day I can live off of my labors and only do what I want to do. But until then, I suppose I might as well punch the clock for someone who doesn't treat me like shit and appreciates, and recognizes, me as a person and an employee. Even though it ain't all that cool in DIY Punk World to work for punk dad bar rockers.

I guess it's just like what Lance Hahn sang all those years ago, "Every wage has got its cost."

ENDNOTES:

1) By the time you read this, *No Friends* will finally be out! It took a little over a year, but issue #1 will finally be ready. You can find more info about that at nofriendszine.com. You can also download issue #0 for free from there.

2) I'm honored as fuck to be helping bring over, for the first time ever, a couple of Cuban punk bands to tour the US. Drew, and the awesome folks with Edmonton's Solidarity Rock are working to bring Adictox and Arrabio up for a North American tour in October. I'm helping put together two October shows for them in Chicago. Cuban punks in the US. I can't even fucking

believe this shit!

3) The Lost Cross House in Carbondale, IL is already starting to prepare for their 30th anniversary party/fest in August 2016. Thirty years of sweaty, drunken, DIY-as-fuck, basement shows. Incredible. If you've ever played there, or lived there, and want to get involved with it—or just attend—get a hold of me.

4) I keep forgetting to my personal email at the end of these columns: stayinchicago@hotmail.com

5) There could definitely be worse places to break down on tour than Green River, Utah.

It was mid-April, not too late at night. I sat around and watched TV with my former housemates. Some of them had to wake up early for work; some of them started later in the day, all unlike me, unemployed at the time. We watched *Ladies and Gentlemen, The Fabulous Stains* and commented on punk fashion, ladies in punk, and the CLASH.

I was tired and I wished I could just curl up by myself and sleep. But they were in my bedroom. Actually, they were in the lounge room. I didn't have a bedroom, nor did I live there anymore. After three years in that small, decrepit, yet cheap house in the inner suburbs of Melbourne, I had moved out a month previously to nowhere. I floated between friends' houses and slept on couches.

I quit both of my jobs, dumped most of my clothes and possessions at a secondhand store, stored my records at my mum's house, and bought a one-way ticket out of there. MOB 47 was playing Melbourne in mid-May (a month from then) and my time in Australia would end for a while, hopefully for a few years, but who knew? After moving out, I spent three weeks touring Australia with Melbourne hardcore punk band SCAB EATER.

SCAB EATER's first show was at Essendon Squat in August 2013. I first saw them when they opened a DEATHCAGE show at the Bendigo not long after. Also on support to this headlining, touring Sydney band were Melbourne locals KROMOSOM and INTERNAL ROT.

I knew most members of SCAB EATER from their other bands or from punk shows, but I hadn't seen the singer around. Will was new about the traps. He had been in Australia a few months, but I was only familiar with people from the Melbourne punk scene.

After their set that night, I cornered Nathan (guitarist) and told him I enjoyed the set and would be interested in putting out their demo on my new label. The only release I'd done at that point was an EEL (Pittsburgh) live cassette tape. He said they already had a self-released one in the works, but that they would be keen for me to do a 7". I followed him out to the alleyway where everyone was drinking goon in order to avoid bar prices, and properly met the other members of the band.

Over the next few months, as the 7" started to come together, Nathan contacted me and said he'd been approached by Yeap from Hardcore Victim, who also wanted to release something from SCAB EATER. As this label was a lot more well known than my own, and it could do well with overseas distro for the 7", I was happy to make the release a split-label one.

After the release of the tape and its Australian promotional tour, Will, a non-permanent Australian resident and a notoriously elusive traveler, went overseas. Instead of a hiatus until the 7", the band did a tour of 26 shows in Southeast Asia while they coaxed Will back to Australia. The 7" came out February 2015, and Will came back for an extensive two-month tour.

The tour started mid-March. I crammed into the back of Owen (bassist)'s 1986 VL Commodore with the band and we hit the road with fellow road dog Alex behind us on his motorbike. We visited big cities and small towns, camped out or swam in pools, rivers and beaches, when there were no shows on or drives too long to be accomplished in one day. I'd only ever visited major Australian cities, but drives through the outback and through small towns made me wish I'd done it before more extensively and several times over.

Though I was glad to be back in Melbourne and out of that Commodore after three weeks, I reaped the usual hard-earned rewards of travel and close quarters with the same people for a long amount of time. The small town shows were the best, although attendance was minimal, and in the bigger cities I caught up with friends and met new ones too. I went to a show three or four times a week, with varied supports and scenes, all passionate and active in local punk. The hospitality was much appreciated. For instance, we had beds as thanks for SCAB EATER'S visits in smaller towns or killer sets in bigger ones.

The Commodore broke down more than a few times over thousands of kilometers and thus added camping on a river's pier to the list of different places we'd slept over the tour: a dried-out river bed, muddy paddocks, lounge room floors, garages, community spaces, caravans. Without doubt, it made couch sleeping luxurious when I got back to Melbourne. Although the car rides were at times long and painful, they were good opportunities not only to listen to new punk music (depending on who got the front passenger seat and thus was DJ) but also to bond over punk music we all enjoyed. We did doughies out near the *Mad Max 2* Museum while we listened to MOTÖRHEAD. We burned around Byron Bay late at night as we blasted the LIVING END and FRENZAL RHOMB, and screamed the words at the top of our lungs. Will, who was from Boston, USA, couldn't understand the nostalgia. Every Aussie punk our age grew up on these two bands in their early teens. Nathan got frustrated at the lack of heavier music when at least once a day Will or I tried to play NANCY, the BUZZCOCKS, or SIAMESE TWINS again. We drove in silence as the scenery changed through WIRE and ROCKET FROM THE TOMBS. We agreed on contemporary bands who killed it at the moment, like DIE or S.H.I.T., and occasionally pulled out some classics like DISCHARGE, SHITLICKERS, or the COMES.

Yesterday SCAB EATER started the second leg of their tour, around Australia again, but this time with SICK PEOPLE and RIPPED OFF from Brisbane. They played Adelaide last night. They're back in Melbourne for Essenfest tonight, a small two-day festival held at Essendon Squat, with a killer line up of bands over the weekend. They've got material for a new 7" and play local shows, with plans for more abroad.

I recommend keeping SCAB EATER in mind as a contemporary Australian band, along with KROMOSOM, INTERNAL ROT, PRAG, LAST CHAOS, RULE OF THIRDS, AUSMUTEANTS, ROYAL HEADACHE and so on, amid Australia's punk diehards.

WHAT'S GOOD, PUNK ROCKERS? Colin Atrophy here, signing in for *MRR* column number whateverthefuck. I'm still in love jail, and haven't really been paying any attention to anything in my life besides that, so I'm *totes unprepared* to write this month. This makes two in a row, and makes me a Bad Columnist, but a good Former Teen Bouncing Souls Fan. Forsake everything for the sake of the crush.

So I dunno, I guess I'll just catch you up on my life, since this is my livejournal. I quit smoking after eighteen years like, six weeks ago as of this writing, and a little over two months ago by the time you read this. It's fucking crazy for me because loving smoking has been such a huge part of my identity for like, *ever*. Like one time me and Good Kid Paulie were out oogling in New England and we showed up at Caroline Paquita and Mikey Hotsauce's house in Providence and were drinking some beers in the kitchen and I was getting ready to step outside and smoke. Caroline was like, "Colin, why don't you cut that out?" and I was like, "Grrrl, for real, smoking is the thing I enjoy most in my life. Like, if I were to estimate, I'd say I've probably smoked, like, 50,000 cigarettes to date and out of those 50,000 I can remember maybe 30 that I didn't totally enjoy. Do you understand those odds? I don't think I've completely, un-self-consciously enjoyed that much of the sex I've had. I don't think I even like punk music that much!"

Anyways, I quit smoking. Mostly it was because I wanted to try Wellbutrin and I knew the doctor would give it to me if I said I quit smoking, but then I was like, "Maybe I should try actually quitting." Wellbutrin scene report: kinda speedy for the first couple days, made me feel like a superhero, but made my therapist genuinely worried about me. Eventually it leveled out, and I just felt regular and not better or worse than I had before. I questioned whether I even needed it in the first place (I don't) and slowly tapered

off, which made me super irritable but was ultimately also pretty non-eventful. Final verdict: rocketship, swirly lollipop, eyes looking left, see-no-evil monkey, lady flipping her hair.

But also what happened is that I got this gnarly flu, and only smoked one cigarette a day for like three or four days, and I didn't even enjoy any of them. Then I was out to dinner with my mom and I mentioned to her that I was considering quitting and it made her so excited that I had to actually give it an honest shot. Speaking of my mom, she turns 60 this month. HBD, ma. Thanks for helping me turn out just fucked-up enough that I'm still punk in my thirties, but not fucked-up enough that I'm dead or like, unmanageably sad all the time. Mazel tov emoji, birthday cake, princess, lady in the pink shirt looking kinda sad but not unmanageably so, twins dressed like dancing bunnies, ghost with his tongue out. Mazel tov emoji is the one that's like, a horn with confetti flying out. I call it that because I always put it next to "Mazel Tov" when I Mazel Tov someone on the internet or in text message. This is truly riveting stuff, huh? Real muckraking.

But yo, quitting smoking when you actually want to isn't that hard, I guess. I also started running too, and since I recently started singing in a band for the first time in ages, what I do is, I listen to records on my headphones and I scream along with them while I run around my neighborhood. This is endurance training both for screaming and for running. If you ever see a person running through Queens wearing one of those Seth Hunx "Suffering From PMS (Putting Up With Men's Shit)" t-shirts and screaming the lyrics to "Street Punx" by the Pist, that's me and you should say hi. I absolutely don't mind getting interrupted.

Also if I see you and I try and bum a cigarette from you, just let me have it. You're not fucking up my quitting. I've smoked one cigarette a week since I quit, with no signs that I'm gonna smoke more. And like, maybe you think this means I haven't really quit but whatever, after smoking for eighteen years getting down to just one cigarette a week is pretty awesome. Cigarette, cherub, smiling doodoo, shrimp tempura.

ENDNOTES:

1) I just went to Austin for the first time and I want to say that I'm super excited about this band Feral Future. Tough as fuck queerdo babes making robust punk music. I been jamming their bandcamp page through my bicycle speaker pretty hard lately. Also I went and saw that band Institute at a tamale restaurant that has punk shows after they close and my Baby Punx of Austin scene report is that I couldn't tell if it was the fog machines or the teens vaping. Institute is good but you already knew that, and also having punk shows in a closed restaurant is always cool but you also knew that too. All in all I give Austin three thumbs up, one sunglass face, one heart eyes because my dream babe lives there, and one dog face for her awesome dog.

2) Have you read the new *Cometbus* about my friend Sue Jeiven dealing with her terminal illness? I haven't yet even though Aaron gave me one, because I keep trying to read it on the subway and every time I pick it up I start crying and I don't like crying on the subway so then I stop. But I'm really happy it exists, and one day I'll be able to finish it, and you should get it, because Sue is a super important person and has done a lot for punk, and she deserves to be seen and heard.

3) Finally, I'm considering that now that I quit smoking I might want to get swole. Do you have any tips for that? Send them to me at sliceharvester@gmail.com or Colin Atrophy / 442-D Lorimer St #230 / Brooklyn, NY 11206. Also I would never suggest that you mail me pills or anything because that would be illegal, but I will say that just because I don't drink anymore doesn't mean I don't like to eat a couple Percocets and watch *Seinfeld* for an entire half a day. Creepy winking tongue-out smiley face. Okay, that's it.

NO COPS, NO CREEPS, PEACE IN THE PIZZERIA, WE ARE THE PUNX, ATROPHY OUT.

You've got this guitar, but it definitely doesn't sound the way you want, and that's a damn shame. You want to shred hard and heavy, but your dad's old guitar can't do it the way you want it with your small combo or your big stack amp. That's really sad, but I'll tell you the reason why: pickups.

The pickups are the heart and soul of any electric guitar. They will define the sound of your instrument, whatever the shape or the quality of it. If your guitar doesn't sound the way you want it to, you can swap the pickups as far as the rooting of the cavity on the body let you do it, and there are plenty of manufacturers around the world that are selling cheap or expensive pickups in various shapes and outputs.

Yes, outputs. Some pickups are strong and powerful with a high output but these sound usually cold and dark, so your blues won't be that bluesy and your jangle won't be that jangly. On the other hand you've got some weak output pickups and these will sound great and subtle, but won't let you play some metal licks. They were designed to stay on the sweet side of things, if you know what I mean. So, here's a short guide to some of the most common and well-known pickups in the world. Also, if you haven't had the chance to read some of my previous columns about this concern, just bear in mind that pickups are small microphones designed for metal strings like the ones you'll find on an electric guitar or bass.

Single coils: This is the simplest and purest form of pickup. It's just one simple bobbin of thin metal wire ("coil," thus the name) with six magnets inserted between that it. Two wires are connected at the start and the end of the coil and that's it. It has the purest and simplest form of sound, and will sound great from anything pop to rock music. That's usually what you'll find on a Stratocaster or Telecaster. There are a lot of different combinations of magnets and metal wires that will give you a lot of different results. For example, a Telecaster pickup will sound different than a Stratocaster pickup. If you want to play some jangly clean yet slightly dirty pop punk tunes à la Youth Avoiders or Masshysteri, this is the kind of thing you'll probably need. They are easy to recognize because they are just that small bar that looks like a finger. They are praised for their bright and sweet tone. The most notable versions of these pickups are found in the Telecaster or the Stratocaster. Some strange variations of these pickups can be found as the "lipstick" on Danelectro guitars or as the "toaster" or "hi-gain" (which has absolutely nothing of a proper hi-gain pickup) on Rickenbackers. The Fender Jaguar also has some interesting single-coils that have their own tonal palette and are really worth a try.

P90 and other hot wound single coils: Social Distortion anyone? That cool dirty and nasty sound is the sound of a P90. Famous for being a Gibson standard for quite some time during the '50s, they were sadly kicked-out by the birth of the humbucker. Some call it the best of both worlds between single-coils and humbuckers, and some just hate the fact that it's neither of those. Well, in its construction, the P90 is just a variation of the single-coil, but the metal coil inside is slightly bigger, with a stronger wire, thus having a tougher tone. They are mostly found on Gibson guitars, under the "dogear" nick (so-called because the plastic cover on it has two rounded ears for the screws, see the Les Paul Junior) or as a soapbar (because they do really look like a small soapbar, which is cute on a 1956 Les Paul Goldtop). Fender also had its own variation of that pickup on the Jazzmaster. It's not exactly the same as the one Gibson designed, but it's still pretty close to it. I'm pretty sure that's what they used to record all of the Night Birds material.

Humbuckers: Back in the '50s everything was fine and Fender was selling all of these guitars that came equipped with single-coils. Life was easy and music revolved around clean and sweet tones, when nobody was angry. (Well, except Chuck Berry. He was mean, but that's another story. He used P90 pickups, if you're wondering…) Music was just made for dancing and being cute. Leo Fender was happy, with a flourishing business, selling guitars and amps like hot pancakes at a food truck on a Saturday morning. But darn those Brit kids, they had to ruin it all with their loud Marshall stacks and their Gibson guitars (Gibson is a US brand but they somehow succeeded to import their guitars in a much wider way than Fender did in the UK), playing loud and heavy with that awful distortion.

See, the single-coil had one major problem: it's awfully noisy when pushed into high volume and a lot of the brands on the market started to receive complaints about it. Some brilliant genius at Gibson, named Seth Lover, figured out that if you put two coils side by side and replace the 6 magnetic poles with one large magnet bar, all of this makes a really nice, strong and noiseless sound, and that's how the humbucker was born, eradicating the inevitable "hum" that the single-coil somehow produces. Its tone is darker

and way stronger than any single-coil, and its design is great to overdrive a small tube amp. This is the definitive pickup you'll hear on so many recordings. They come in a lot of different variations, but the design is pretty much always the same, whether there is a metal cover on it or not (removing the metal cover on a humbucker was sort of a big trend during the '80s, thanks to Jeff Beck). It's just about two bobbins side by side with a magnet bar under it. It's a pretty neat design that brings a strong yet dark and deep tone. The Gibson Les Paul, as we know it today, had a huge impact on making these popular. The original and traditional humbucker that was created by Seth Lover at Gibson was unintentionally named PAF, which came from the "patent applied for" sticker that came with the early versions of it.

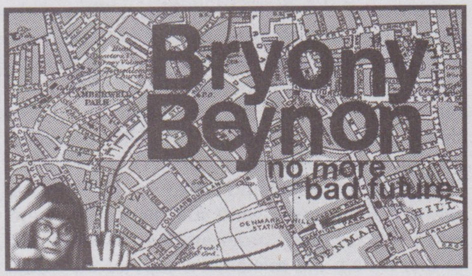
Variations on a humbucker: The humbucker became so popular that it was designed in a lot of variations—don't be afraid when you come across some weird things. The mini-humbucker, for example, is just a P90 soapbar sized humbucker that holds the properties of the real deal, yet will sound a little brighter than the standard one. The Wide Range is another creation from Seth Lover, but this time for Fender. They asked for a strong yet very bright pickup, and that's what they got. You can easily recognize the Wide Range from the three poles popping up on each bobbin, as opposed to a standard humbucker which has all six poles out on one single bobbin. A lot of different designs have proved effective, trying different magnet materials and combinations, with some odd results like the Firebird pickup which looks like a mini humbucker, but uses two metal rails instead of the metal poles. Another variation on the humbucker design is the Filtertron, which was popularized in most of the Gretsch guitars, which has twelve adjustable poles out of the two bobbins. Also, for aggressive music style, the Dimarzio Super Distortion was highly popular in the punk and metal scenes during the '90s and even expended to Ian MacKaye when he was playing with Fugazi. A lot of the Motörhead material was written and is still played with a set of SH-1 and SH-4 pickups from Seymour Duncan which, I must confess, I'm a big fan of myself. But these two are just a few examples of a couple of all time classic designs and you don't necessarily have to go with active pickups if you want to put out an aggressive and strong sound. There's a huge selection of hot wounded humbuckers with different magnet materials like Alnico 5, Alnico 8 or ceramic that will give you a sharp and angry sound. The combinations are pretty much endless and pickup manufacturers have come out with a lot of innovations revolving around the humbucker design through the years.

Active pickups: Have a nine-volt battery in your instrument? Well, chances are strong that you have active pickups. See, the humbucker reigned as a master for a very long period of time until people started to complain about it. The humbucker was too weak and couldn't hold its tone with some really long instrument cables, like when you're playing in a stadium. So engineers started to work on a new design, a design so modern and powerful that it incorporated active elements that acted like a pre-amp inside the guitar. Originally created for jazz and blues purposes, they were considered, in a clean sound, to be sterile and lifeless as compared to the passive pickups. But little they knew that the ever-growing metal scene was about to explode around the world and that these active pickups had such a high and strong output that they were awesome with high-gain amps and aggressive sounds. It is not the sole purpose of these pickups, but they have a strength and ice cold sound that fits perfectly for any aggressive music style. EMG has probably manufactured the most iconic set with the 85 and 81 active humbuckers combination but they are also available in a large variety of size and shapes.

Bass pickups: Bass pickups are no different than the sorts described above. There are single-coils, most notably on the Precision Bass and Jazz Bass, and humbuckers or active pickups. It's not really worth rewriting all of the above, but I do need to mention that I got some surprisingly good results from switching some cheap or factory pickups on basses to higher-end pickups, so it is really worth the try, not only on a guitar.

All in all…: It's really worth it, and replacing a pickup is usually just a two solder job with a good soldering iron. (The cheap ones won't heat enough to solder anything to the back of a pot, trust me and get yourself a fancy one—it's really worth it if you want to investigate the DIY world of pedals and amp-making!) There are a lot of big and fancy companies manufacturing pickups, but the market is now full of fairly-priced products. If you can find some used that are not broken, then just go for it. There're plenty of tutorials around the internet for you to experiment with different combinations. Or just ask me here: instrumentsoneohone@gmail.com

ENDNOTES:
Have you heard the Horrendous – *War Is Still…* recording? This one is from the dirty basements of Sweden and it's full of members from all your favorite bands, so you'd better not forget to check it out.



A break from DIY Space interrogations for this month for something I wrote at the beginning of this year for a zine project that never happened, which I never published elsewhere because it felt a little raw, a little far, a little much. Not the sort of fayre I'd usually serve up here but the times, I feel, demand it.

****

I am so tired. I move like an ocean liner. Decks weighted with stories. Every disclosure is a smashed padlock. We are ships in the night and we go down quietly. There is no cacophony now, because we've seen it play out the same way too many times.

A part of my waged labor, my day-in, day-out, is talking to people, sometimes young teenagers, sometimes greying adults, about violence. I talk to them, sometimes with a shake to my voice, about rape and abuse and confront the lies and myths we tell ourselves about both. Sometimes we will spend a day talking about men who hunt children. Other times we will talk about gender, pain, court processes, coercion, the police, ritual abuse. Always drawing out of these groups the crux of these things, the true roots of violence, that one-two punch: Power and Control. Here's the thing. I chose this work. I trained for it, I live for it and it propels me from sleep on the coldest of mornings and here is why: because I am hopelessly desperate for the infinitesimal parts of the waking world that I will encounter in my short pathetic lifetime to be, in some tiny way, changed, and this seems like one way to do it.

Then, at night, when the feedback forms have been filled in, I roll up my flipchart paper and the lights go out, just like you, for some release, I will go to the gig. To pogo and to beer and close my eyes and be with my people. And what do I find there?

This guy in that band; that dude in the corner; him over these; those two; the guitarist; the drummer; the promoter's friend; the guy who used to play in; did you know he, did you hear he, actually he, I mean, I don't like to talk about it but, he's the one who, the one who, the one who..

We go down quietly.

These hurling inevitabilities stalk us like a punishment. Of course not every day, every gig, thank goddess, is there a disclosure that bears witness to the full force of male violence. (Although statistically this is only because some secrets are locked up for good.) Most often it is "only" the searing entitlement of another sound guy who does not know how to speak to women. Only the leering eyes of a man you barely know. Only those hands on the small of your back. Only an off the cuff comment that it was too hard to question. Only being followed around a venue by a member of staff. Only being forced to smile, take it as a compliment, take it however they say you must. Only the pain of feeling myself like a stuck record, hearing my own tired reaction at ear bleeding volume, when it is that or be eaten alive by my own palsied rage, even though most nights the chance to just submit to the life of a defeated husk-woman sounds like sweet relief, stuck as I am in an aching body so close to giving up on the only world that has ever felt anything like home, as masks are slipping and all those cool shirts you all wear read only "COWARD" "COWARD" "COWARD."

Here is a nasty truth, brought to you by fifteen years at the coalface of useless posturing. Punk is *worse.* Why? Because punk believes itself immune from all those broken old –isms. Yeah, we abolished that shit in '82. God loves a punk rock perpetrator.

An old lady by punk standards, creeping up on thirty, few bands under my belt, trying hard to make shit happen, to let in tiny shafts of light. I should be a past master by now but I am still just rattling the locked gates, howling the same boring song. I have typed and scribbled and talked and shouted my way through an adult life of disappointment at every different breed of punk failing miserably to be a decent human being, instead preferring to learn the art of contortion, just enough to sit on our own throats.

I don't have some revolutionary plan for all this, not right now, at least. I want people to not hurt other people and I want to play music.

Okay. A kindly, made-up punk boy. Let's look at him. An average geezer, a mate to many mates. Maybe he's a sweet and peaceful thinker, or an excitable brain-punk with an ear for a good riff or sick beat, cool records, quick wit, lovely dude. Believe yourself to be a solid man. You had some girlfriends, or some boyfriends, you were nice to them, maybe they even loved you, for a while. Your mother taught you respect and your father taught you discipline, but you didn't let it haunt you. You've been moving through life just trying to do the Right Thing. You have even been having Some Thoughts About Politics Recently. I am scared of a lot of men like this because I have watched them choose not to act when they were needed. With my own eyes, my own body.

I heard, yeah, I mean I heard what she said happened, and yeah I mean it could be true, but I mean...that's fucked up, like, I'd feel a bit weird saying anything, it's not my place to ask, it would be inappropriate to speak, it would be a bit much, no one really knows what happened, we'll never know, its kind of none of my business, this is actually like really hard for me, and like…

and then it comes. An intake of breath, and your mouth makes the shapes and you say it out loud and my whole burnt-out body is a screaming mouth and I say nothing else after because you have slammed the door

He's always been cool with me. He's always been cool with me. He's always been cool with me. He's always been cool with me. He's always been cool with me. He's always been cool with me. He's always been cool with me. He's always been cool with me. He's always been cool with me. He's always been cool with me. He's always been cool with me.

Our whole body is a screaming mouth. But he has always been cool with you.

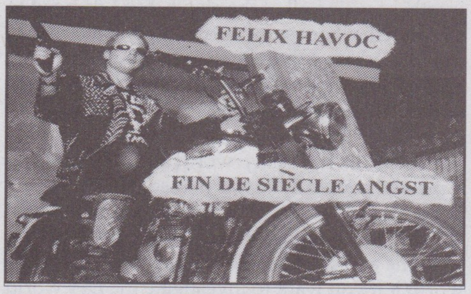
***

We are alive, all of us, sighing, wheezing through the second decade of a pitch black century..

Struggling, bound and gagged inside a shitsystem that relies in part on our complacency to function. The only thing we need from you is for you to believe and to listen. Stand, in whatever way you can make work for you, with women who have been belittled, hated, bullied, sexual assaulted, humiliated by abusive punk adult baby-men, and consider this, that maybe the baby-men who do this are not worthy of your friendship and your casual acquaintance, or are worth, at least, the benefit of a Serious Talk. Because here is an uncomfortable truth. People can change, for the better, I will believe this until the day I die because it is true. What is also true is that it is neither the job nor the responsibility of those they have shat on to clean up their mess and murmur "mmm, delicious" while doing it. So maybe you could just even, at the very, very least, use your golden all-valuable man-opinion (not being facetious, this is the one currency that will always be one step ahead) for a word in an ear, on the risk that it might swing a person an inch closer towards the self awareness required to be accountable for the steaming vats of poisonous medieval bullshit we currently got on the boil.

In or outside of punk, I am continually so shocked when any man steps out of his comfort zone to side with a woman, and or a survivor, that it sends a white hot ripple of hope through me, gone before I can bottle it. This is a sorry state of affairs. The cookie jar will not be full forever. This is basic human empathy. You are poised on a precipice without ever knowing it. We are looking at your face expectantly. His hands are not your hands. Their words did not come from your mouth, no. You did not push and push until there was no more resistance. It was not you. Not you, no, you are made of better stuff, aren't you? But your silence, and every day more of it, makes you guilty. These are the dimensions of your violence. Every day is another day you didn't show you're any different. Your tacit approval is the grease on the machine. Women's bodies are on those gears. Your hands at the controls.

I am so tired.



I left DC in a hurry in the spring of 1988. I literally threw everything that would fit into the back of a pick-up truck and headed west. I thought I would follow a lot of my friends who had moved to the Bay Area a few years earlier. But I had some pen pals in Minneapolis and decided to visit a while, and wound up deciding to stay. After a year or so I went back to DC for a week to visit and tie up some loose ends. Anyone who was around DC in the '80s remembers Vinyl Ink Records in Silver Spring. I have many treasures in my collection, and a huge number of them came from this shop. Vinyl Ink also sponsored a record swap. During my visit to DC I dropped into Vinyl Ink and bought some records. On the wall were test pressings of the first Minor Threat 7" and the Government Issue *Legless Bull* EP, both priced at $48. This was just too much for me, and thought about it and left without them. I mulled this over for a day or two. I am laughing out loud as I type this, but it took days of agonizing deliberation to actually spend *forty eight dollars* on a punk record. But finally, I cracked and called up the shop and asked if the records were still there, they were, and I sent a money order and had them mailed to me. If I am not mistaken a copy of the Minor Threat test recently sold for over $1000, which just shows you how much times have changed.

In 1999 I took a trip to Finland and Sweden to attend two festivals. This trip is very special to me, because it was where I first met my wife, with whom I had become pen pals via *MRR*. I spent a lot of time on that trip visiting record shops and filling a suitcase with punk vinyl. There was a shop in Helsinki called Pop Angel that had a box of rare records kept behind the counter. It was the custom for the local punks to go in, ask to see the box, and flip through the overpriced rarities in awe and wonder. I, of course, went through this box. There was some *really* good stuff in there, Unicef, Systeemi, lots of first and second wave Finnish Punk and Hardcore singles, but all priced a bit over what they probably should have been. I mean, a lot of records that probably should have been $75 or $100 were priced at $120 or $150. I didn't buy any of them, because the prices just seemed too high. Then on the day before I flew back to Minneapolis, I got up early and went back to that shop. I was there when they opened and asked to see the box. The clerk rolled his eyes, used to the local punks ogling but never buying anything. I judiciously made a small stack of some of the rarest and best Finnish punk 7"s and charged $1500 to my credit card. This seemed like an astronomical sum at the time, and the records really were overprice, but, I reasoned that it might be years, if ever, before I had a chance to buy these records again and that I should take the chance while I had it. I am *so* glad I did. Soon after all those records skyrocketed in value as the internet took off.

At one of those Vinyl Ink record swaps, Jeff Nelson was selling off a bunch of records. He had some great stuff, and the prices were reasonable. I can still remember buying a Negative Approach 7", Poison Idea's *Pick Your King*, Crucifix's *1984*, Wretched's *Finira Mai* and a Negazione *Tutti Pazzi* with a letter inside inviting Minor Threat to tour Italy. I spent all the money I had with me. Then I walked to the local branch of my bank and took out all the money I had and went back and bought more records. I drove home, borrowed all the money my roommate had, went back, and bought a few more records. My only regret is that I didn't have more cash. A few tables down Jordan from Revelation was selling a copy of SSD's *Get it Away* for $40. I passed on this, too high. But I did introduce myself and arrange a deal to swap my Millennium Falcon (still in the box) and some GI Joes for a Youth of Today 7" on color vinyl with Batman stamp and some other early Rev vinyl.

While restoring the 1909 home where I now live, I spent a lot of time researching vintage light fixtures. I bought and restored several vintage fixtures to match the home's period decor. In the process I became fascinated with the beautiful glass art nouveau shades of the period. Tiffany, Steuben, Quezal and other companies created glass art mostly as vases, but also as lamp shades. This magical period at the dawn of the 20th century saw a one-time meeting of old world craftsmanship with modern technology and produced some truly amazing works of art in glass. These are of course now valuable collectors items, as the skills to create this glass died out during the Depression and never came back.

In researching this glass, I stumbled across a book called *Collecting Art Nouveau Shades* by Darrah L Roberts. Although published in the early '70s, this is still the definitive book on the subject. Roberts was incredibly passionate about his collecting and was a great writer to boot. His vast knowledge, wisdom, and good taste are present on every page of this volume. When you dig deeper into collecting, you find that the personality types, experiences, and the "vibe" are quite similar be it records, art glass, pottery, furniture, etc. One can insert oneself into a new collector "scene" and instantly relate even if you don't know much about what is being collected. The people, their outlook, and the experiences are quite similar. Darrah Roberts closed his book with some advice for collectors:

1) Learn to evaluate your own glass and rely

on no one else to do it for you. If you are going to collect something there is no excuse for your not being knowledgeable about it.

2) Be a discriminating collector. Buy meritorious pieces only. Remember this as a rule of thumb: if the piece had merit when it was originally made and sold, chances are that it will still have it today. However, if it had no merit then, you can expect it to have none today.

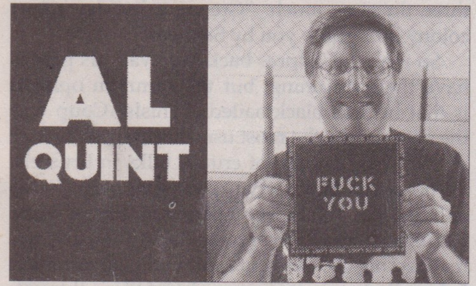
3) Don't buy for the investment aspect alone.

4) Don't allow the dream of a sleeper to distort your judgement.

5) Don't balk at buying a choice piece just because you think the price may be a trifle high. A price paid is soon forgotten if the piece purchased is a choice example showing workmanship and beauty.

That last one rings so true to me when I look at the shocking high prices records are trading for today. I breathe sigh after sigh of relief that I did not balk at the horror prices of many of the choice records in my collection. I was driven and passionate about it and very dedicated to getting everything on my want list. I was mocked for being so amped up on hardcore vinyl when '80s hardcore was kind of passé. But this is the music that connects with me, and I will treasure these artifacts if they are in or out of style. The quality of the content is the ultimate driver of value, and quality is worth paying for.

Can we talk about the Rajoitus/Utanför Skapet split LP now? Not many people buy split LPs anymore. Like comps, it's a format that the record buying public has shunned, although bands and labels keep cranking them out. However, this one pairs up to two top-shelf Swedish bands. I don't know why so many people have slept on Utanför Skapet (at least around here)—it's some totally raging Swedish hardcore with a bit of a metallic Kang edge. Those wailing guitars! And what can we say about Rajoitus? These guys have been blazing for probably 20 years now and they never disappoint. Seriously not a weak track in this band's catalog, always hard-hitting, fast hardcore with well thought-out riffs. This material is excellent, fast hi-octane hardcore with lyrics in Finnish and a Rattus cover at the end of their side.



I COME NOT TO BURY NOR PRAISE DAVE GROHL

I try not to pay a lot of attention to Dave Grohl or his band the Foo Fighters. It's kind of impossible these days, given that Dave has been in just about every music documentary in the past few years—he seems to have usurped Henry Rollins in ubiquity—plus he has that HBO series and was profiled on *60 Minutes* last fall. I don't know Dave personally—I might have met him briefly when he played with SCREAM but honestly don't remember. An acquaintance of mine who played in a pretty good Connecticut hardcore band in the '80s told me he and his son ran into Dave near where the Foos were playing that night and Dave remembered his band and hooked them up with tickets for the show. He said Dave couldn't have been nicer. Other people I know say the same thing.

Dave recently broke his leg when he fell off the stage at a show in Sweden, leading to the cancellation of some tour dates. He did finish that set after getting his leg bandaged up and then played a July 4th show at RFK Stadium in DC sitting on a throne. That's right...a fucking *throne*. I read things like "Rock is not dead, Dave Grohl is the spirit of rock and roll I am now convinced." You often hear the Foo Fighters referred to as the last great rock'n'roll band. Good grief. Anyway, when a friend of mine posted the throne pictures on his Facebook page, I dug into my digital photo archives and found shots of Jon from VICTIMS on their 2004 tour playing while seated after having broken his foot and completely rocking out like he does on two feet. Someone related the tale—Jon broke it getting hip tossed into a tree by trying to drunk wrestle (I'm not sure what drunk wrestling is but it doesn't sound all that safe). The break was pretty bad and he and Felix Havoc, who was driving them around, had to go back to a hospital in Allentown, PA a few times on that tour for check-ups. No throne for Jon—it was a wooden chair and the foot was propped up on a stool.

Jon and Dave aren't the only ones who have hewed to the "show must go on" ethic. Far from it. I've seen several musicians playing seated while they had their legs in casts. Keith Morris did a CIRCLE JERKS tour in a brace after having broken his back. Bruce from FLIPPER performed while hooked up to a heart monitor and Will Shatter did a tour in a cast. Jeff Beccera from the death metal band POSSESSED now performs in a wheelchair. He was paralyzed from the waist down after being shot in 1990 and started playing again in 2007 with a revamped lineup. Leonard from the DICKIES also did a show in a wheelchair and on crutches after busting his leg.

One of my favorite stories is about Todd Cote from the Western Mass. band BIU (alternately standing for BRAIN INJURED UNIT and BONDED IN UNITY). This is something I actually witnessed. Todd broke his neck stagediving at an ANGRY SAMOANS show in Boston in 1983. This happened early in the show. Fortunately, he wasn't paralyzed but spent the rest of the afternoon lying on his back in the rear of the club. He refused to go to the hospital until after the show because he didn't want to miss the SAMOANS. He ultimately ended up with a halo brace screwed into his skull for awhile and did a BIU show in a wheelchair. Top that, Grohl! Or top the guy I saw getting in the pit in his wheelchair a few years ago at a club in Boston. Sure, he toppled over once or twice but it only stopped him momentarily.

Speaking of sons (which we were, earlier in this column), my band SHATTERED SILENCE played a show awhile back at the Boiler Room basement space in Boston and one of the other bands was V-SECT, who were nice enough to lend us their bass amp. That band's bass player, Brendon, is the 22-year-old son of a guy I knew from the old Newport, RI hardcore scene—Brian Simmons, who does the recently reactivated Atomic Action label and did *Constant Change* zine back in the day. I loved going to shows down there. They were at a jazz club called the Blue Pelican and my band back then got a hell of a lot more acceptance than we did in Boston. It was the same for Western Mass. for that matter.

The first time I saw Brian in years was in 2010 at the big Gallery East reunion show with all the old Boston warhorses like DYS, JERRY'S KIDS, GANG GREEN and the FU'S, footage from which was used for the *All Ages* Boston hardcore documentary. Brian brought Brendon along and I found it mind boggling that he had a son as old as he was when I first met him back in the '80s. And then I played with his kid's band some five years later. Brian gives his son space, though. He mentioned that he doesn't want his son to feel weirded out by having his old man around. In fact, when I was talking to Brendon at that Boiler Room show, I wondered if I should avoid the topic. I did mention it in passing, but decided not to regale him with stories of the good old days. The show almost didn't happen, as it was. When we got there, a couple of guys were carrying out shop-vac canisters full of water to clean up a flood that had happened down there. Luckily, everyone still got to play and no one got electrocuted.

Yep, we're getting older. Punk rock people I knew in the '80s are not only fathers but grandfathers—Denny, the former drummer for the Massachusetts band PSYCHO, was telling me about his grandchild not too long ago. His former bandmate Johnny X is AUGUST SPIES' vocalist Christian's stepfather. We've now got over-60-year-olds or people approaching that age still involved in punk. Keith Morris turns 60 this year and Dave MDC hits that milestone next year. Bob from KONTRASEKT and URBN-DK is over 60 and still plays raw, noisy, no-bullshit hardcore in the DIY scene. As I said a few columns ago, anyone who thinks DIY punk is strictly a youth movement can go fuck themselves. Back off or I'll hit you with my walker someday.

MUSIC FOR THE YOUNG AND YOUNG AT HEART

I can't keep up with who's in this or that NYC punk band of the so-called "bung"/New York's Alright crop—it's so incestuous—but DAWN OF HUMANS have been around since the dawn of the decade (sorry). They started a few years before that, in fact, but just released their debut album *Slurping At The Cosmos Spine*. It's got that same noisy, spazzed-out, fuzzed-out sound that's also been utilized by CRAZY SPIRIT, with the strangled/nasally vocals. The arrangements follow a certain pattern with shuffling, tinny drums and distorted guitar and bass, but varying in tempo. They slow it down to a dirge for "Grapitudonce of Hinsenctor" and "Horse Blind," the latter having the same feel as a song like RUDIMENTARY PENI's "Army of Jesus." The album has the top-notch Toxic State packaging, including two posters. An entrancing weirdness on this one. (katorgaworks.bigcartel.com)

Speaking of NYC bands, FLYKILLS have been quite prolific over the past year, pumping out one demo after another and their two latest are a compilation of three demos on one tape (including one released for a tour of Colombia),

with almost 20 songs, and a brand new demo called *Squirrel* that features a few previously-released songs, three new originals and two somewhat obscure (at least to me) cover songs. Gustavo is also a nasally-sounding vocalist and there are different punk strains inspiring their music—anarcho-punk, goth and more tuneful fodder to name a few—that are twisted into their own vision and done in sharp, economical fashion. The covers show a different side—the poppy, goth-tinged "Vamos Jugar" by early '80s Spanish band PARALISIS PERMANENTE (which is so good, I decided to track down more of this band's music) and the melodic "Sin Reacción" by Colombian band MUTANTEX. Buzz and burn but also adding texture and nuance, especially with their guitar sound. Flykills are quickly becoming a band to be reckoned with. (flykills.bandcamp.com)

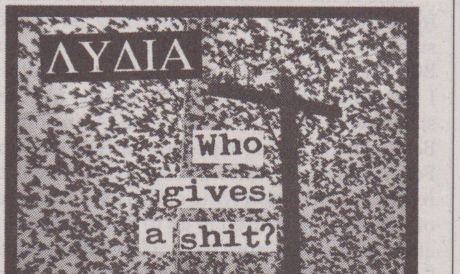
INSTITUTE's debut album *Catharsis* has been worth the wait, following a demo, 7" and 12" EP. It's been logging a ton of turntable time and the songs are irresistible. While there's a dark side to this band, "Perpetual Ebb" gets things started with an upbeat, EDDY CURRENT flavor—in fact, that applies to a number of songs here and you can hear a WIRE echo, as well. What they do is so simple—a deceptively-catchy minimalism, percolating bass and steady drums mixing it up with guitar lines that pack melodic nuance, as well as straight-ahead power. There's a nice six-string chime for "I Am Living Death." Moses' vocals have kind of a flat, detached cadence and are semi-slurred but expressive. There's even a brief poem that leads into the full-tilt "Cheaptime Morals," the most aggressive song on the album. Most of the songs have a self-analytical lyrical bent but "Christian Right," the song with a relatively small number of words makes the strongest social statement, building up a heady mesh over the course of its eight-plus minutes. This one's probably going to find its way into my year-end top ten. (Sacred Bones, sacredbonesrecords.com)

I mentioned the Boiler Room earlier—if you've never been there, it's in a shack-type building that looks like it's about to fall down and the basement room where they do the shows is like a graffiti-covered bomb shelter. It's spawned some mean-as-fuck sounding bands and CHAIN RANK is no exception. They up their game from their demo big-time on their first record, the *Up Against The Wall* 12". Muscular, no BS old-school hardcore punk with Kevin's sore-throat vocal bellicosity. Having one of Boston's better drummers, Ryan Abbott, doesn't hurt either, as he provides the engine to the stripped-down and energetic compositions. Nothing ground-breaking or original—the stomping "Time For It To End" has a similar feel to DYS's "City To City," for instance, but they get the job done. (self-released, twerprecords.storenvy.com)

One Boiler Room show I skipped recently—and really wish I hadn't—was when VAASKA came back through with NYC band AJAX. At least I have their new album *Todos Contra Todos* courtesy of Mark from Beach Impediment Records. It's their first 12" release since 2010 and it's introduced with a loud fanfare and quickly getting down to some serious D-beating. The lyric sheet states it's not on Clay Records. I don't know what label DISCHARGE's new single is on but I'm not as interested in hearing that as I'm interested in hearing the latest by these guys. Yeah, they're DIS-sciples (argh!) but not pure copiers. One secret weapon is Victor's shit-hot fret work and the production is lively and not polished. It gets the fist pumping, hitting all the right buttons, and the mid-paced "Guerra Sagrada" makes the floor shake. Did I mention I really wish I hadn't skipped their recent show? This one's the *scorchah* (MassHole speak) that you hoped it'd be. (PO Box 8335, Richmond, VA 23450, beachimpedimentrecords.blogspot.com)

I snuck a look at BIG CRUX's bandcamp page while listening to *We Got A Jam!*, the cassette compilation of their previous releases recorded from 2010 to 2013 and one of the descriptions was "neo bop." I remember that was a term the BIG BOYS used and when I interviewed them, they said it was something that producer Spot had come up with to describe bands like the MINUTEMEN and SACCHARINE TRUST and he also applied it to the BIG BOYS. Their vocalist Biscuit said "Neo-Bopism is happenin'!" Well, it's still happenin' with Big Crux. Their music is imbued with a funk/post-punk eclecticism inspired by those bands, especially the BIG BOYS, and "Warship" could be an outtake from the MINUTEMEN's *Double Nickels* album. They also refer to proto-core on one of the songs here and the lyrics have a clever reference to the FEEDERZ' Frank Discussion. Don't think that makes it sound like a relic, though. BIG CRUX sound fresh and vibrant. The tape includes an unreleased PLUGZ cover ("In The Wait"). Their vocalist/guitarist Felix Reyes also sent along their 2014 album *Ponchito*, which is equally impressive. It widens the range a bit, incorporating Latin music shadings and the melody is somewhat more prominent but there's still an abundance of kinetic energy. If a song like "Buscando" doesn't make you want to dance around, you should probably check your pulse. (B<X, bigcrux.blogspot.com; Not Normal, notnormal.bandcamp.com)

Al Quint, PO Box 43, Peabody, MA 01960, subvox82@gmail.com, subvox.blogspot.com, sonicoverload.net



It was July 4th and people were going nuts outside. Fire crackers going off, people drinking, dancing and barbequing in the streets, the bangs so frequent, the yelling and screaming so constant, I wasn't sure if people were having fun anymore or getting into brawls. Either way, I was holed up in the house all weekend, avoiding the outside world, plugged into any device with an internet access, streaming constant updates from the situation back home. Greece is about ten hours ahead of the west coast, so while half of me was present in Oakland, fireworks going off outside my window, the other half of me was watching the morning news as Sunday the 5th dawned on a Greece ready to take to the ballot box. They were faced with a #Greferendum.

The question posed was this (and I'm paraphrasing): Should the new bailout program, suggested by the European Committee (EC), European Central Bank (ECB). and International Monetary Fund (IMF)—aka the blood-sucking Troika—on June 26, 2015, and which consisted of two documents, titled "Reforms for the Completion of the Current Program and Beyond" and "Preliminary Debt Sustainability Analysis," be accepted?

This of course sparked a wave of criticism as to whether a referendum should have even been held, was it democratic, was the question stated clearly enough, would a "no" mean exiting the Eurozone, can pigs turn paper into gold, etc? People saw through the wool being pulled over their eyes and on July 5th, 61.3% of the 62.5% of the population who voted, voted "no," versus the 38.7% of people who voted "yes" to this new bailout dealt. Few discussed the amount of people who didn't vote at all (37.5%). Some saw the "no" result as a minor victory, the other recent one being the election of a leftwing government after decades of a dual party/family system. Others saw the whole thing as a sham, a farce for false hope—which didn't turn out to be far from the truth.

#ThisIsACoup

Not surprisingly (though quite disappointingly for some) five days later, after having ranked up the anti-austerity propaganda and promises, the Greek Prime Minister, Alexis Tsipras, did a full-on political U-turn (or back flip as we call it back home) and said "yes" to this new bailout deal. This means more pension cuts, a hike in VAT taxes, more government funding cuts, privatization of state owned operations, *and* a deposit of 50 billion euros worth of assets. "'Cause I say so" and because they know we don't actually have the money. The agreement, which is an exercise in vagueness and can be found online, doesn't specify what kind of assets Greece would have to hand over…among its other delusional suggestions. That sounds like free range to me, meaning they will buy off everything at ridiculously low prices, then sell it off again for three times as much. "Greece: a holiday resort colony brought to you by Siemens!"

So why did Tsipras back-flip? Various parties have their reasoning, but the common opinion is that he was blackmailed. #ThisIsACoup was the supposedly the most used hashtag on Twitter on July 16th, the day of crucial talks in Brussels. "Who needs tanks when you have banks" was another one. "Merkel competing for title of worst German leader." Everyone, including Tsipras, realized his government (and every government before that) was unprepared to follow through with full-blown opposition to the troika. With the troika having "lost their trust in Greek politicians" and threatening a Grexit—and also SYRIZA trying to use the Grexit's negative repercussions as negotiation leverage—and amidst cabinet reshuffling, PM's resigning, banks closed for a third week, and social unrest and widespread uncertainty ever present, it's pretty evident Tsipras was in a bind. And without a Plan B he's willing to bet his political career—and the whole country's future—on, I'm guessing he cracked

under pressure. If down the line the troika deal fails—and it will—he can blame the troika. If he failed to make any progress after a Grexit, it would all be on him.

However, polls show Tsipras is still favored among the public, with 38% preferring him to the other "more corrupt" politicians who have been in power the last three decades. SYRIZA has only had six months to prove anything, but given that he essentially just agreed to a third bailout deal (the first was in 2010 under George Papandreou's PASOK, the second one under Kostas Karamanlis' New Democracy) Tsipras doesn't seem to be having trouble following suit and making an utter clusterfuck of what was already an epic fail situation.

Since then, by the way, both those former PM's have (obviously!) fallen off the face of the earth, while the three dominant parties in Greek politics have undergone major reshuffling. Just today (July 20) Tsipras' new cabinet was announced, after more radical dissident "no" voters from within the party stepped down in protest against the new bailout agreement. Word on the street is they're gonna form another party, further left than what SYRIZA claims to be—which can hardly be called left anymore, given what it has just agreed to. Picture this: if they all used to compete and bicker amongst themselves to get to the money table, now the money has dried up but they're all *chained* to said empty table, and the hand that feeds is closing in for a slap.

Of course the troika doesn't care about what the Greek people think or want or vote. Wolfgang Schäuble, Germany's finance minster and member of the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (so you get the picture) supposedly said that elections cannot be allowed to change anything. Debt versus "democracy." Greece was asked to accept concessions as a condition of even negotiating the new "rescue" plan. The troika knows Greece can't afford a Grexit. It will "extend and pretend" for a few more months, "kick the can down the road" as the media are tagging it, and hand over just enough money to prevent immediate bankruptcy, but in no way offer any kind of resolution. After all, this is a problem it benefits from. What really worries them is the loss of power, and Europe has been on shaky ground for a while now.

The Euro Fantasy

The euro is a currency shared between nineteen countries (the Eurozone) of the twenty-eight consisting the EU. When the euro was "constructed" in 1993, after Germany was "unified again" with the fall of the Berlin Wall, and then eventually implemented in 1999, there seemed to be no provisions or plan for a country wishing or needing to exit the Eurozone. One of the euro ideas was that a common currency would increase the line of credit smaller countries would have access to.

This is why, in 2001, the then Simitis-run PASOK government got Goldman Sachs to help cook the books (the infamous "swaps") so Greece would qualify for entry. Governments cooking their books is nothing new (they are the number one spenders of money worldwide) and neither is debt being written off. Germany in fact had its debt written off in 1953 after WWII, while Greece has been defaulting on or restructuring its debt in some shape or form for 92 of the 150 years it's been "independent."

Most of the Greek debt is held by quasi-governmental institutions, and not the private sector. Some people declared it "illegitimate." Their reasoning? Approximately 90% of the loans given to Greece, issued by the troika, went back towards bailing our private banks and, of course, paying off the troika—*not* towards reviving the Greek economy. The money was funneled though Greek banks to go right back into the foreign banks, who were lending us money for the loans we were forced to take out under troika rule. I think there's a name for that...oh right, predatory lending.

Todays, Greece's total debt amounts to higher than 175% of its GDP. To put it in perspective, the overall amount of foreign debt Greece has (in dollars) is just under $353 billion. The US's foreign debt is just above $6 trillion. Then again, Greece is a very, very small country in comparison (with a population smaller than Ohio) and an even smaller economy, its GDP making up less than 2/10s of 1% of the global GDP. Its two domestic economic pillars are tourism and shipping, the second of which receives little scrutiny while enjoying high tax breaks.

That aside, the Greek debt is also unsustainable. Some people have known this since 2010. Greece defaulting and bringing about "the collapse of the euro and catastrophic effects on the global economy" has been a sideshow story for years. Even the IMF, which benefits from lending more money to small counties that cannot see enough growth to pay the loan off, admitted that the debt was too big to service. It's pretty evident by now, even to a ten-year-old, that this is a systemic problem, a vicious cycle.

Other countries, such as Portugal and Italy, like Greece, accumulated debt they could only repay by borrowing more money. As long as there was credit, and with the euro, there was apparently. Then the 2008 global debt crisis happened, bringing borrowing to a pause. The unified monetary policy made this a problem for Eurozone counties, who continue to have independent fiscal policies. So, Germany agreed to foot the bill, as long as countries followed the austerity measures that came along with the loan agreement.

See, upon entering the Eurozone, countries gave up their monetary rights to the ECB, who decides how much money is cut and what interest rates one can borrow at. So, even though Greece, for example, controls how much it can collect in taxes, which it gets from people's earnings, under the troika's thumb it doesn't have a say in whether taxes are cut or not, or how much people's earning will go down or not. This poses a contradiction.

And that's really the realization that is now staring everyone in the face: this is about something larger than Greece. It could be about... [enter dramatic drum solo] the end of the euro! ... or in the very least a major restructuring of how the EU and the Euro can coexist at the same time without causing a financial and humanitarian crisis along the way.

"The next day"

So, this is about more than Greece, or democracy or debt; for them this is about power and the struggle to keep the status quo in place. If the Eurozone failed, some consider it would be "the worst European [read: German] failure since WWII."

If Greece's creditors agreed to cut the Greek debt by 50%, then other countries with staggering debt, like Italy, Portugal and Ireland, might ask for the same thing. Some are proposing that this was Germany's plan all along: to make Greece an offer they would obviously refuse. It seems like Germany and the troika are wanting to set a precedent for countries like France and Italy who also have high debt rates, metaphorically cracking the whip before anyone gets too bold.

Some think of all this as an excellent *tabula rasa* moment for European countries to regroup. These "regrouping" scenarios seem to have two main faces. The US model and the fascist model. (So again: super fucked, or extra fucked.) The first one they are predicting might look a bit like a United States of Europe, where countries no longer have their own fiscal policies and instead have agreed to establish a new fiscal union which would have control over all Eurozone countries, now on both a monetary and fiscal level. This idea is not only über fucking complicated, as we would basically be talking about trying to unite a bunch of very different counties under common laws, but it is also rather unpopular among euro folk.

However, the technocrats in Brussels, as far as I gather, find the EU, and all the rules and regulations it must circumvent, annoying. The IMF is a horrid, corrupt organization, and the Eurogroup (the nineteen finance minsters of countries that use the euro) apparently isn't even a group recognized by law (as if that would have established its legitimacy, but whatever...) so it does not have to keep minutes, or answer to any laws, and can hold meetings behind closed doors. I'm guessing there is nothing they want more than a way to gain more power. A suddenly "revolting" southern Europe is the last they want on their agenda. Because the other trend across Europe, the rise of the rightwing, is probably more in their favor, as opposed to debt-cutting lefties like now *former* finance minister, Yianis Varoufakis, who resigned—or was "asked" to anyway.

This other face of a possible "regrouping" would look more like a dreaded continuation of what we are sadly already witnessing: an increase in fascist and nationalist tendencies, as is the pattern during extreme polarization, political and financial turmoil. This has historically led to bloody war, including civil war (so it would not be a first for Greece, the memories of its last civil war still vivid in people's memories). If Greece exited the Eurozone, it would mean a field day for the nationalists and fascists, who want noting more than to seize a broken and vulnerable country to then "save" it.

In fact, so far Germany seems to be one of the few countries to benefit from its entry in the Eurozone. It also suits the German political status quo to have countries like Greece in a perpetual pseudo-depression, as it leaves more room in the trading playground for dominance. Statistics suggest that Germany, an export-based economy, has indeed seen less unemployment since entering the Eurozone (at 5%) in comparison to many other Eurozone countries (at about 13%). Greece's unemployment rate is at 25.6% (that's one in four people), its unemployed youth numbers staggering at 49.7% in 2015. Suicides

tripled between 2009 and 2012, with now almost half the country either below the poverty line, or hovering just above it.

Chomsky called it class war, others slow genocide, for sure this was a set up. Whatever the deal is, this story will continue to unfold and will have most likely changed by the time you read this, and sadly all of the outcomes look grim as fuck. Whether that's elections and a possible Grexit, or more austerity and a possible Grexit, the combinations of inventive fuckery seems endless really. The end-point for tonight at least, is that Greece is epically fucked either way. A Grexit has been forecast for down the line, so it is appearing inevitable to some, and it seems the real question is whether Greece will be able to default on its own terms, or once again succumb to the absurd troika rule. I have had much debate back and forth, over what the better solution might be (obviously neither of the ones on the table right now being the optimal one), what the rumoured upcoming elections might look like, what the country would look like under a new currency on the ground level up, what kind of structures would rise and fall, what social trends might prevail, etc., but that is a discussion for another time.

ENDNOTES:
What you just read is my understanding of the situation within conventional brackets. This is not my hardline opinion on the matter, merely a summary of the major events as popularly perceived. I'm not a financial analyst or political science major, and there are surely points I forgot, or left out for lack of space. I'm just trying to deposit a timeline of how fucked up their system is and how their game seems to be working against the people. If you have comments, questions, or just want to get in touch, for whatever reason, you can reach me at lydia@ maximumrocknroll.com

I first visited New York City in the fall of 1988. I walked all day, everywhere, for weeks straight until I had blisters on my feet and I'd developed a crick in my neck from looking up at all the tall buildings. It was glorious.

The anarcho/ultra milieu was jumping at the time. Folks from WBAI, many from the old Moorish Orthodox Radio Crusade, the Libertarian Book Club, Anarchist Black Cross, THRUSH, Neither East Nor West, and that was just the politics. Probably the least interesting encounter I had was with Hakim Bey *aka* Peter Lamborn Wilson, while the most impressive was with Joey Homicides *aka* Bob McGlynn. Libertarian things were popping all over because the Warsaw Pact had just crumbled, and the old Soviet Union was on the verge of collapse.

Then there was all the touristy stuff I wanted to do, first time in The City. I spent a whole day at the Museum of Modern Art, making a beeline for Van Gogh's "Starry Night," then walking around the rest of the building in utter rapture. I turned a corner, aimlessly, only to stumble upon Pablo Picasso's "Guernica." I was floored. The oversized painting had its own room, and it wasn't in the best of shape. Cracked, peeling, warped, the somber black and white canvas made the hairs stand up on the back of my head.

Picasso is one of those people who elicits wide, often violent opinions. If you look at his drawings and paintings from before he went Cubist, during his Blue Period for instance, you can well understand why he was considered a brilliant artist. His politics were a bit more dodgy. Apparently, Picasso had entrusted "Guernica" to the MoMA after his death to keep until such time that the return of democracy to Spain allowed for the painting's return. As I stood in the MoMA gazing at what I thought was an anti-fascist icon, a deal had been cut with the museum to return the original "Guernica" in 1981, despite the fact that Spain was a constitutional monarchy and not a democracy. I realized many years later that what I had seen in 1988 was not "Guernica" but the related masterpiece "The Charnel House," so similar in style and power. Picasso was a member of the Communist Party, which meant he was an apologist for Stalin and his crimes, including the crimes committed by the Spanish CP during the Spanish Civil War. And he was a complete asshole, personally, when it came to women. Of his wives, lovers, and mistresses, two killed themselves and two went mad associating with a man who said: "For me there are only two kinds of women, goddesses and doormats."

"Loyal, generous and affectionate when it suited him, Picasso could be astoundingly brutal, to friends, lovers, even complete strangers," wrote Mark Hudson. Lots of artist types turn out to be brilliant at their art, and thus publicly praised, while their private lives often reveal profound personal and moral failings. Of course, this disassociation between the public and the private goes both ways, with a common if mundane observation being that Hitler, arguably the world's most brutal dictator, loved dogs and children and was loyal to Eva Braun. It's easy to come up with a list of 15 or 20 great artists who were nasty people, but not so easy to name even 5 people generally considered evil who have also done demonstrable good. The idea of the brilliant genius artist who is simultaneously a monumental jerk is so frequent as to have become a trope. And when genius and asshole reside in the same individual, dispassionately evaluating famous people and their contributions can be tricky.

It becomes immensely more so when passion is involved. Gregory, the youngest son of Ernest Hemingway, wrote to his father spelling out the pros and cons from his traumatized perspective: "When it's all added up, papa, it will be: he wrote a few good stories, had a novel and fresh approach to reality and he destroyed five persons – Hadley, Pauline, Marty, Patrick, and possibly myself. Which do you think is the most important, your self-centered shit, the stories or the people?" To someone who loves Hemingway's writing, or who admires good literature in general, any evaluation of the worth and cost/benefit of the man and his work might be substantially different, bringing to mind Tolstoy's famous quote that "[a]ll happy families resemble one another, each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way."

Evaluating merit is not much easier when we switch from the life and work of an individual, whether famous or not, to gauging the merit of our not-so-personal relationships, with the organizations and movements we belong to or support. I wrote a column some time ago about how I experimented with every drug in the book during the 1960s, and only alcohol managed to kick my ass. I was more or less a daily drinker, not heavy but strong and steady, for 30 years up until January 1, 2010. It was all just maintenance at that point. My habit was fucking with me, my relationships, my pancreas, and to my mind the costs of my regular alcohol intake far outweighed the benefits. So, I decided to quit, and I did so through the Chemical Dependency and Recovery Program at Kaiser, of which I am a member. CDRP provided me with regular professional counseling, access to a shrink who could also prescribe drugs in case my withdrawal symptoms got too heavy, classes on the science of dependency and withdrawal, and lots and lots of meetings. Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, LifeRing meetings, harm reduction meetings, I went to every meeting and every class and every counseling session for 90 days until I no longer had a problem staying sober. The scientific knowledge alone—of what your mind and body go through 30, 60, and 90 days after withdrawal—was worth the price of admission.

Of course, AA was and is ubiquitous, as the oldest and best known absolutely free recovery program around. But AA impressed me as a cult from the very first chanted call-and-response. I freely admit to having cherry-picked different principles from different programs to get the recovery that works for me—among them the notions of surrender and forgiveness from AA, the ideas of secularity and self-help from LifeRing, and the medical use of prescribed drugs when necessary to help with withdrawal from harm reduction. Still, virtually everybody around me was in AA, working an AA program, so I accepted the validity and efficacy of AA in going about not drinking. I started sitting zazen at the San Francisco Zen Center, with its meditation in recovery meetings being my anchor for five years. But over those years the focus of those meetings, equal parts Buddhism and 12-step recovery, has grown thin, not because of the zen but because of the steps.

Whether or not there is a god has absolutely nothing to do with the existence, nature, and solution to suffering. That's basic Buddhism, whose founder cautioned: "Believe nothing, no matter where you read it, or who said it, no matter if I have said it, unless it agrees with your own reason and your own common sense." I've been pretty much an atheist after giving up Catholicism for Lent at 13. Buddhism is about as non theistic, and zen as atheistic, as you can get

and still call it a spiritual practice.

I never saw or felt the need for a god to help me stop drinking, and no matter how much AA papers over it, some concept of god is required for their program to work. Court-ordered AA participation is thus a direct violation of the basic Constitutional right to religious liberty, in this case the freedom to *not* have a religion. All that "your 'higher power' can be anything, even a doorknob" AA bullshit I find theologically imbecilic, spiritually vacuous, and personally insulting. Surrendering to a "higher power" isn't necessary to experience the need to forgive and be forgiven, or to simply surrender and ask for help. Whether or not a god exists has absolutely nothing to do with stopping drinking and staying sober.

The debate over whether alcohol abuse is a disease or a choice is not resolved, although more and more scientists are supporting the disease model. Prolonged alcohol abuse chemically restructures the alcoholic's body and brain and causes the difficulties in withdrawal, according to current scientific research, and there is much evidence that certain individuals are born with a proclivity for addiction to alcohol. AA's main problem is that its central metaphor of "alcoholism as disease" clashes with various other aspects of AA's program. If alcoholism is a disease, then why blame the alcoholic for the moral failure of not staying sober? If alcoholism is a disease, then why does AA resist the use of drugs like naltrexone to lessen the desire to drink? If I had a disease like cancer I would do everything in my power—prescription drugs, radiation, chemotherapy, surgery—to control or eliminate that disease. I certainly wouldn't sit around making a "fearless moral inventory" of my personal failings, asking for forgiveness for my moral shortcomings, then seeking moral support from a god that doesn't exist when cold, hard science is crucial to my cure. Or, as Gabrielle Glaser wrote in her recent *Atlantic Monthly* article "The Irrationality of Alcoholics Anonymous": "Why do we assume they [alcoholics] failed the program, rather than that the program failed them?"

Aside from Glaser's excellent article there is a whole website (orange-papers.org) devoted to systematically and thoroughly debunking AA—its history, program, and claims. AA is ranked 38th out of 48 common alcohol treatment methods, not very effective at all. Given that it is "anonymous," recovery statistics for AA are hard to come by and even harder to verify. *The Sober Truth: Debunking the Bad Science Behind 12-Step Programs and the Rehab Industry* by Lance Dodes puts the actual success rate for AA somewhere between 5 and 8 percent. Every disease has a spontaneous remission rate, and Harvard Medical School calculated that the annual rate of spontaneous remission in alcoholics is around 5 percent. Which means that AA's track record is at, or at most just 3 percent higher than the spontaneous remission rate for alcoholics. Hardly worth all the hoopla surrounding AA's supposed successes.

But even one recovered alcoholic is success enough, many in AA would argue. Combine the abysmally low rate of recovery with other problems in AA such as 13th Stepping and AA's cons far outweigh the pros. Thirteenth Stepping is when individuals, oftentimes mandated by law to attend AA meetings, take advantage of AA's horizontal and relatively leaderless organization in general, and its unsupervised sponsor/sponsee structure in particular, to prey upon and sexually exploit newbies, most often young naïve girls. CBS's *60 Minutes* did an entire segment, "The Sober Truth," that, along with *The 13th Step Film* by Monica Richardson, exposed the underreported realities of 13th Stepping. But the rampant problem of 13th Stepping is not even acknowledged, let alone addressed, by AA's national/international organization.

When I was running around NYC back in 1988, I hung around a crew of friends and comrades, many of whom were heavy drinkers. And since it was a vacation for me, I was drinking more than my usual. One of my companions at the time wisecracked: "The liver is a muscle that must be exercised." Well, the brain is also a muscle, and our capacity for analysis and coming to reasoned conclusions needs to be exercised as well. My judgment is still out on whether Picasso's or Hemingway's art was worth the human damage those artists inflicted. Not so with AA, where its paltry success rate is not offset by it problems, everything from its moralizing guilt tripping to 13th Stepping. There are lots of evidence-based non 12-step recovery and support programs out there, including a promising Buddhist-based one pioneered by Noah Levine called Refuge Recovery. As for AA?

Don't believe the hype!

(Copy editing by K Raketz.)

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA... My first novel *End Time* (AK Press, POB 40682, SF, CA 94140-0682), or *Fim* in Portuguese (Conrad Editora, R. Maracaí, 185, Aclimação, 01534-030, São Paulo-SP, Brasil), is out of print. My second novel is in the works. I'm archiving past columns, and publishing current ones on my political blog, www.leftyhooligan.wordpress.com. My personal blog is www.gamatiasz.wordpress.com. I can be contacted at hooligentsia@icloud.com.

"We're desperate – Get used to it."
—X, "We're Desperate"

"Life is a gamble. We scramble for money. I might crack a smile but ain't a damn thing funny."
—Mobb Deep, "Eye for an Eye (Your Beef is Mines)"

"Law on the streets, it's always the same: They say they wanna kill·ya but they don't know yer name"
—Undead, "Sanctuary"

A Bomb in the Baby Carriage

Bonjour Boners et Blockheads! I'm past deadline and I've been driving back from Merced, California where I bought a 2004 Ford Ranger. A member of the Gang accompanied me and we outfitted the bare-bones gas-guzzler with some $20 laptop speakers that plugged into an AC/12volt converter. Our plan was to jam the solid sounds of Oi! all the way across I-10 documenting how Oi! pairs with this American land (the Gang says "No" to *This American Life*, by the way). Turns out Motel 6s, Lucky 7s and Super 8s aren't the most conducive places to buckle down on (self-imposed) punk commitments. Most evenings I was worn out from driving or hiking (124°F in Death Valley!) and the prospect of sitting at a small shitty desk writing small shitty words was most times overruled by *Shark Week* or *Naked and Afraid* and a pizza from Dominos. So goes my life. But I'll tell you what: This country we got is downright beautiful and majestic. All you gotta do is ask the thousands of foreigners who visit our National Parks every day. And they don't just visit the "popular" parks either; I had to wait for 20 minutes to use a pisser in the Petrified Forrest cuz a bunch of Italians were using like a Roman bath. Oof. Point is, we spent three weeks driving around not writing. Now I'm home so dig in you bums.

THE DEFENDERS – "Small Town, Small Lights" demo: Mid-paced street punk from Santa Cruz. The singer Kenny Helwig was in SLIP and the FORGOTTEN and you can hear those bands in the DEFENDERS sound as well. Truth is I forget what SLIP sounds like. They played one of the first shows I went to as a wee-punk but I remember SUBINCISION and OPPRESSED LOGIC much more clearly. Anyway, this is killer, well put-together catchy street punk that sometimes moves into early HUDSON FALCONS or THOSE UNKNOWN. Give them some dough here (or you can be a freeloader): theDefendersSantaCruz.bandcamp.com

ATLANTES – "Civilisation Perdue / Guerriers Atlantes" 7": ATLANTES is a (studio?) project from, Wattie of MARABOOTS and LION'S LAW fame and Rattus of Portugal's FACÇÃO OPPOSTA. Lyrics are in are in French and the music is serious and almost somber Oi! with strong chanted choruses. Songs are about the lost civilization of Atlantis and the strength of its warriors (whatevs). I was hoping for some saxophone on this record, but alas there are none. The sound of crashing waves on "Guerriers Atlantes" sets the mood and is a nice touch. It's out on Bigorna Records. Contact them to get your copy: bigorna.recs@gmail.com

THE BRASS – "Back to Work" demo: Read this then go rip a door off its hinges: "Got to keep my head up/Make it thru another day/Alcohol is my religion/And I got my rent to pay!/My days are filled with sweat and my nights are filled with broken glass/Gotta head back to the job tomorrow and bust my fuckin' ass!/Barely treading water/Barely staying alive/The only thing between me and the street/Is my shift on the 9 to 5!" That's from the song "Treading Water" and it's really all you need to know. THE BRASS reside in Brooklyn and play Oi! Put that shit together. This EP is up for free on their bandcamp. Go get it and if you live in NYC go buy these dudes a beer: theBrassOi.bandcamp.com

THE AGRIOS – "Gradas Puentes Calles Aceras"

EP: These three hombres from Costa Rica play up-tempo oi! that sounds like all three guys are singing at the same time. The bass is bouncy in a UK82 kinda way, ABRASIVE WHEELS but from Costa Rica. Ya know? Lyrics are sung in Spanish and deal with issues like street life, pride of place and being mislabeled and misunderstood. You get two songs to a side and an insert with lyrics (in Spanish) and skinhead stuff. This is out on Stratum Records (stratumrecords.nl) who are the Dutch culprits that last year also brought forth two killer and under-exposed EPs from THUNDER & GLORY (Philly) and COURT STREET (Rockford, IL). The AGRIOS EP is limited to 200. 35 of those have a slick KICKER BOYS piss-take cover I'll be looking for. Go to Stratum to snag it.

MISHAP – "What Can Be Done" download: The cover art on this makes me think these dudes are straightxedge skinheads. But I've been fooled before. Take a band like HOUNDS OF HATE: those dudes look like jean-short models in a Brylcreem ad. Good music. Not skins. Whatevs. MISHAP might not be skins, but they're obviously hardworking dudes from outside Philadelphia (maybe Doylestown?) who play fast stomping SxE hardcore with youth-crew breakdowns. Lyrics are intelligent and on point, "Here's Hoping": "Now we're fighting ourselves/Fighting the world/Fighting the each other/Fighting the power/Fighting the fight itself/And still nothing changes, right? Am I right/Well here's hoping I'm wrong/I'm wrong!" Breakdowns and reverb on the vocals. And enough earnestness to kinda make you cringe, but I like it. Like the poem at the end of *Screaming For Change*. Even when (even when...) the silence is broken. Cough. Get MISHAPS digi-album at mishaphc.bandcamp.com

OLGA FROM THE TOY DOLLS – "Olgacoustic" LP: You know what this is. Or you don't, but now you do. Randale Records has paid to have Olga record fifteen TOY DOLLS songs in acoustic versions. The songs span the TOY DOLLS career which is nice cuz I'm not a massive fan or anything and prolly never heard anything from their output in the mid '90s. But I have now and it sounds like Olga getting free-kay on a geeetar. Not sure the purpose of this. These aren't ballad versions or slowed down or changed up. I gotta be honest: I didn't buy the thing. And I'm glad. But one of the Gang is out €15 plus s/h from Germany so you know...That's their rent. And I ain't fronting anyone anymore! I'm tapped. Being a truck owner is expensive. So thank you Randale for once again offering up shit we all find ourselves compelled to buy but isn't worth it. Yeesh. At least that new RANCID best of, *All the Moonstompers* (with Oi! Oi! art by Alteau) collects nineteen (yawn) of their "ska" songs. It's another money pit Randale put out, but it's got a concept beyond, "Let Olga fuck around for 45 minutes." Double yeesh. We'll end it at that. Tune in next month for all the stuff that was waiting for me under bills and bank statements. Ears!

ENDNOTES:

1) Correct me at: AmericanBootGang@Gmail.com

2) I'm going to keep repping the Oi! blogs: Really, go to american-oi.com. New reviews almost every day. It's impressive.

3) HARD GIRLS are not an Oi! band. They are most certainly not a group of "Brummie Byrds playing HARD SKIN covers" as the tape that was given to me says. Good prank. HARD GIRLS are dudes who play music that sounds like that DON CABALLERO that's nice to read to. But the dude sings too much and kills the mood. Not Oi!

4) When this comes out I think Skullfest will be in full swing. Get ready to see pale punks with full leather in Pittsburgh deep summer. 95 degrees with an 80% humidity topper. Like a bong filled with PBR. Blerg.

5) Naming your truck is...What men do? Yes?

6) When there's silence/Friends need not speak/It's understood/Die I would...Boom

I've been writing these columns so far in bits and pieces without any sort of overarching theme in mind, although sometimes there're unintentional connections between the records that I've been listening to that end up striking me as potential subjects to write about. That's basically what happened this month as I was flipping through my paper notebook full of half-finished reviews that I'd started scribbling out—there's a couple of female-fronted '80s post-punk obscurities that I feel still haven't really gotten their proper due, and a handful of bands operating in the here and now who (knowingly or unknowingly) are following some of those very same stylistic paths. There's the recurring debate as to whether or not using the term "female-fronted" as a descriptor reduces the band in question to a factor that has absolutely no bearing on their musical merits, and while I've definitely seen the term thrown around in those kinds of problematic ways, I also consider it as a useful shorthand to help me in my inclination to seek out and support the creative efforts of other women as often as I can. It's the same reason that I sought out as many classes focused on feminist and queer and non-white art movements as I could when I was working on my degree in art history—while it would be amazing for ALL discussions of art history to include those voices, thus reducing the need for them to be studied in isolation, the reality is that the canon privileges those with privilege. I guess this is my way of saying that this month's column is an extension of my continuous efforts to give space and recognition to so many of the amazing, creative women who I'd love to see become household names in the greater punk community, and in the case of bands that haven't existed since the Reagan/Thatcher era, whose histories might otherwise be lost or neglected.

While I've definitely welcomed the renewed attention and appreciation being given to New Zealand's unique take on gauzy, VELVET UNDERGROUND-inspired ramshackle pop now forever associated with (arguably) the three most celebrated bands in the Flying Nun catalog (the BATS, the CLEAN, and the CHILLS), there's also an incredible and often overlooked history of late '70s/early '80s Kiwi post-punk that reaches far outside of that particular scope. There's at least half a dozen Kiwi musical agitators from that era that I'll more than likely get to in this column before too long, but I'll start with PLAYTHINGS, an unjustly unsung female-fronted group from Christchurch who stood squarely at the crossroads of no-nonsense punk and adventurous post-punk during their relatively brief existence. Fronted by two women, Jay Clarkson (bass) and Janine Saundercock (guitar), PLAYTHINGS released their debut single in 1981, with each vocalist getting one song (and one side) of the record. The moody, post-punk "Coloured" on the A-side is Jay's turn at the mic, marked by razor-sharp stabs of angular guitar with a dark and mysterious early UK DIY/Rough Trade feel—I seem to mention the AU PAIRS a lot when it comes to that particular sound, and I'm going to do it again here. Janine takes over on the flip for "Sit Down (Stand Up)", which is a completely different side of the same coin, exploding with the bold, don't-fuck-with-me attitude of the first wave of New York punk. I've seen PLAYTHINGS described as "the PATTI SMITH GROUP of Christchurch," but I'd say that they're much closer to having been a female-fronted incarnation of RICHARD HELL AND THE VOIDOIDS (at least on this side of the single). Seriously one of my favorite non-Flying Nun New Zealand musical exports of all time.

Sydney, Australia's the PARTICLES exemplified the increasingly blurred line between spiky, angular post-punk and DIY oddball pop in the early-to-mid '80s. *Colour In*, their debut 7" from 1980, features three minimalist pop songs with the same sort of lovelorn post-punk sensibility that made the earliest singles from the GO-BETWEENS (their like-minded neighbors to the north in Brisbane) so endearing. The nervous and jittery "Zig Zag" follows the most conventionally post-punk pattern of the bunch, with a bass-centered focus on rhythm and frontwoman Astrid Spielman's vocals alternating between being detached and conversational at one moment and airy and delicately melodic the next, setting the PARTICLES up as kindred spirits with bands of the era like DOLLY MIXTURE or GIRLS AT OUR BEST! who didn't shy away from being explicitly pop-minded in their approach to answering the call of the "anyone can do it" DIY punk renaissance. The follow-up, 1981's *Advanced Colouring* 7", put slightly more emphasis on the post-punk side of the equation, with some majorly DELTA 5/MO-DETTES-esque angular bass lines and Astrid's sunny-as-ever voice delivering lines about computers and banging pieces of wood together like they were Dadaist art poetry. By their third and final single (the *I Luv Trumpet* 7" from 1984), they'd come full circle, back to the spritely proto-twee pop they'd first dipped their toes into on songs like "Apricot's Dream" from *Colour In* (and yeah, there's a lot of trumpet involved this time, too). The first two singles in particular are essential, underhyped treasures of the '80s post-punk underground. Astrid Spielman passed away in March of this year, but with any luck, the PARTICLES' legacy

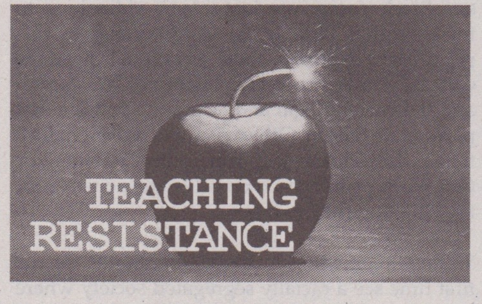
will be revived in her honor.

Gymnastics is the killer debut LP from SNEAKS (the alter-ego of one-woman musical force of nature Eva Moolchan), sounding more like an artifact of rhythm-obsessed post-punk (No) New York City circa 1981 than Washington, DC in 2015. The seven songs from her cassette on Sister Polygon late last year all make a reappearance here with the addition of three new tracks, including "Someone Like That" which, at just over two minutes long, is almost double the length of a typical SNEAKS song and introduces icy coldwave synth to her self-described "zing zong" minimalist blueprint of hypnotic, repetitive bass lines paired with the steady pulse of a drum machine and cooly detached recitations of her lyrical mantras. SNEAKS' ability to make so much out of so little actually reminds me a lot of trailblazing minimal wave electro-post-punk eccentrics CRASH COURSE IN SCIENCE, and the LP's most simultaneously danceable and defiant moment ("X.T.Y.") has the influence of genre-bending post-punk godmothers ESG all over it, transforming the Scroggins sisters' feminist sneers (think "Erase You" or "You're No Good") into SNEAKS' declaration that "you turn me inside out and then you ruin me" over a totally monster bass rumble. Best LP of 2015 contender! (dangerrecords.bandcamp.com)

Philadelphia's BLEEDING RAINBOW (aka READING RAINBOW) ceased to exist earlier this year, but singer/bassist/drummer Sarah Everton has resurfaced in a brand new trio called BLOWDRYER, whose six-song *Deprogrammed* cassette picks up many of the same heavily fuzzed-out noise-pop threads as her previous band, albeit with a much grittier, raw punk edge. The overall effect sounds something like the BREEDERS playing a basement show, particularly on "Threadbare" and the rough-around-the-edges and ridiculously catchy title track, with sugar-spiked vocals that could have been lifted straight from the textbook of Kim Deal. A completely different bass-playing patron saint named Kim provides a guiding light in the form of the monotone spoken passages that punctuate the distorted guitar blowouts in "Wavelength", where BLOWDRYER start their own SONIC YOUTH-indebted teenage riot, while the bursts of feedback and bratty vocals on "Wet Rat" echo the economical, lo-fi sounds of early '90s Kill Rock Stars/K Records legends like KICKING GIANT and BRATMOBILE, who never abandoned off-center pop hooks even when they were at their most raucous and untamed. Limited to 100 copies on Manic Static Records, so get ahold of one while you still can. (blowdryer.bandcamp.com)

VITAL IDLES are a new (like, very new—they just played their first show in late May) band from Glasgow, Scotland drawing from the same twin inspirations of skeletal, rough-hewn DIY pop and feral post-punk clatter as a good number of the other bands mentioned in this column, if thirty or so years removed. They have an equally new demo cassette on the UK-based label Comfortable on a Tightrope that shows the sort of freewheeling refusal to paint inside the lines that's as close to the messy brilliance of the femme-punk holy grail that is the PETTICOATS lone 1980 single as anything that I can remember hearing in a very long time, and that's not a comparison that I would make lightly (see: "My Sentiments" and "Pitching"). They've even managed to do the nearly impossible and made a SMITHS song tolerable for me, by bending "Jeane" into an asymmetrical post-punk shape with frontwoman Jessica's vocals careening back and forth without any notion of what constitutes "being in tune", over the most rudimentary of drum beats and some stark, ringing guitar. Ultimately, though, VITAL IDLES are very much a pop band at their core, albeit a highly off-kilter one, with sparks of the wide-eyed naive charm of the MARINE GIRLS or BEAT HAPPENING, who were pioneers of making these sorts of bare-bones songs within a decidedly punk framework. They're way more punk than Morrissey, too. (vitalidles.bandcamp.com)

Send me letters and music! Let's talk! Analog: Erika Elizabeth / 2545 E. Burnside Street #203 / Portland, OR 97214 / USA; digital: ripitupstartagain@gmail.com; radio shows for your listening enjoyment: expresswaytoyrskull.com



Though the institutions of education are historically problematic and often oppressive, students who have experienced them as "outsiders" (including many punks) understand the importance of learning from teachers who have developed radical notions of what education is and how it works. Teaching Resistance *is designed to provide a platform for radical, subversive teachers/educators to share their ideas and draw attention to important issues around education. This month's column deals with the often-uncomfortable, inevitable complexities of communicating about systemic racism (particularly anti-Black racism) in the U.S. with students who are primarily from immigrant backgrounds. It is by Ian McDeath, who grew up in Philly and is an indispensable shitworker and super-busy musician in the DIY punk scene there. He teaches at an adult school for older teens and adults. Ian can be contacted directly at igwinter@yahoo.com.*

Talking to ESL Students About Anti-Black Racism

I sort of started teaching ESL (English as a second language) as a work-study job while in college in New Brunswick, New Jersey. I say "sort of" because my actual job there was assistant to the teacher of the bilingual Kindergarten class and I basically just read weird stories and did cool art shit with 5 year olds. I got the job because I qualified for financial aid and because I had taken an extra year of Spanish in high school. I imagine there was probably a person who needed the job more and spoke Spanish better than I did. A few years later, I began working at an ESL school for adults of many different language backgrounds, also in New Jersey, and then at a similar school in Philadelphia.

I like teaching and see it as a radical act because as a friend once pointed out, it's a form of authority that inherently undermines itself. I try to apply my politics to my classroom in fundamental ways. For example, every cycle, the class works together to create agreements (rather than rules) for themselves and for me. I try to empower them to teach each other. A lot of my lessons involve teaching students how use free and widely available resources to learn things on their own so that they don't feel like they have to rely on some gatekeeper of knowledge.

I also try to talk openly about racism in my classroom. I do this when I hear or see something that strikes me as racist and I encourage my students to do the same. Generally speaking, these incidents aren't directed at anyone in the classroom and I haven't heard a lot of students say that they have felt personally hurt by racism from fellow students. What I more commonly find myself stopping class to talk about are anti-Black (specifically in reference to American Black people) comments reflecting people's personal experiences, which range from feeling uncomfortable on the subway for absolutely no reason to being victims of mugging and assault. I am white (and straight and cis male and college-educated) so I am familiar with people saying racist (and other types of fucked up) shit to me and thinking that I'm going to agree with them.

In my initial years of teaching adults, I made the mistake of treating these comments from students as if they were coming from someone in the political punk scene. That is to say, I got angry (sincerely so) or tried to embarrass the person who made the comment with the objective of pushing them to reflect on what they had said, understand why it was fucked up and never say it again. I've come to realize how misguided and uncool it was to take that approach with someone who hasn't had the same opportunity that I've had to unlearn a lot of shit. It's especially troubling when you consider that these were students who trusted me to help them.

Once I realized that my approach to anti-Black racism from my students was not helping them and mostly just making them uncomfortable talking to me about their feelings and experiences, I started trying to simply avoid the topic. I told myself that I was there to teach a language and anything else that they needed to know, they would learn one way or another. If someone told me that their child's teacher was lazy and thought it necessary to mention that the teacher was Black, I would simply omit that detail in my head and carry on the conversation as if the person hadn't mentioned it. If a young student said that they had trouble understanding Black people when they talked (followed by a ridiculous, caricatured imitation of Black American English), I would just say, "I don't know what to tell you." Taking this approach made me feel just as bad about myself as my previous approach.

The comment that caused me to reevaluate my response to my students' anti-Black racism came from a then-student, a few years younger than me, who I have always liked and respected as a person, about a co-worker of mine who I deeply admire as a teacher and as a friend. Purely in the interest of illustrating the complexity of the situation, I will say that the both the student and the teacher in question are Muslim and that the comment centered on criticism of Black American Islam because of its connection to prisons. The

comment also rang hollow of conviction, like the student was repeating something they had heard said with confidence but that they didn't necessarily believe. I didn't know what to say but I felt like the longer I let the comment linger in the air, the deeper the frustration set in. I wanted to go off for hours about history and capitalism and the media and capitalism and the police and capitalism but I didn't even know where to start and I could feel myself getting more frustrated, so instead I just asked "Have you ever read *The Autobiography of Malcolm X?*"

"No, teacher. I don't like to read. Only what you give me for homework."

"It's also a movie. I'll find you a copy if you promise you'll watch it."

"Of course, teacher. I love movies."

We ended up watching it together after class and talked about a lot of the themes and messages in the movie as well as the important historical background and how that history has morphed into the current landscape of anti-Black racism in the United States. We talked about how that gets exported via mainstream television and movies to people in other countries.

I'm not sure if all of that was the right way for me to go about addressing the student's comment. On the one hand, it kind of feels like it was just a white person (me) lecturing a non-white person about racism but I think it was also a lesson on the historically and culturally specific way that anti-Blackness exists in the United States. There are also a few things that I learned are important about discussing American racism with recently arrived adults from other countries:

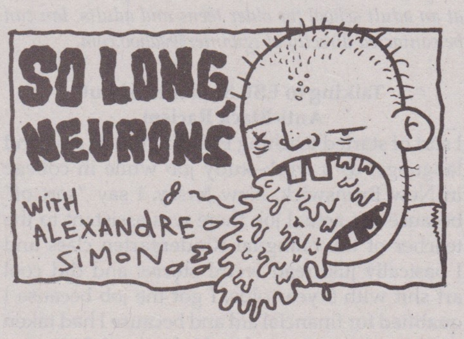
1) Most places in the world have their own forms of anti-Blackness. In some places, it's similar to the United States, where Black people continue to be the victims of poverty and violence at disproportionate rates as a result of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the racist institutions that it morphed into. In other places, Black people are immigrants, seen by the population as an invasive other, taking jobs, contributing to crime and tainting the cultural (read: racial) purity. In some places anti-Blackness is the process of occupation and colonialism by foreign armies and companies that deplete countries of resources and pit people against each other for survival. In some places, anti-Blackness is simply racist American media imported and internalized, which brings me my next point.

2) Racist American media is consumed worldwide and, just like it does here, it influences beliefs and feelings towards American Black people. American television and movies tend to portray Black people as violent and prone to criminality and this becomes internalized in some of my students (some of whom would be considered Black by most Americans) even before they arrive in this country. I'm often asked which parts of the city are fun/beautiful/safe to go to with the expressed or implied understanding that Black neighborhoods are none of these things.

3) For someone that has not been raised and educated in our specific and complicated formula of coded racism, it can seem pretty absurd. They see a world where most Americans hate and fear Black people but never say it directly. The cultural ideal they are presented of an American is a middle-class, white, college-educated person. They see these Americans afraid to go to Black neighborhoods or uncomfortable around young Black people but then have to learn a new set of culturally specific words and phrases to avoid saying that, which is a lot for someone who is already adapting to a new language.

4) Most non-Black American people, including ESL teachers, need to address their own anti-Black racism before they can really talk to their students about the topic. It's important for a teacher (or anyone, really) to understand how they themselves are affected by anti-Black racism. A teacher's anti-Black racism can present itself in the topics that the teacher chooses to talk about in class and how they choose to talk about them. It can also appear in how the teachers talks about the place where they live, their friends and co-workers and current social and political events. If they are afraid of or less comfortable around Black people or in Black neighborhoods, then for that teacher to tell students not to make anti-Black comments just seems ridiculous to them (and it kind of is). Additionally to this point, ESL teachers (and everyone) need to educate themselves on the history of U.S. racism and the current legal and economic policies that perpetuate racism. Otherwise, it can seem like all this anti-Blackness just came out of nowhere or that Black people are themselves responsible for the situation they're in.

5. Students coming to the United States for the first time see a racially segregated society where most Americans tend to interact with people who come from similar racial, economic and language backgrounds and where Black people are disproportionately victims of violence and poverty and most non-Black people don't do anything to change that. It is easy for students to look at non-Black people in society and believe that they are racist (which a lot of them are). Unless a non-Black teacher makes a point to address racism in their class, it is possible, and not totally crazy, for students to think the teacher might dislike Black people. All non-Black people have the responsibility to fight anti-Black racism. For ESL teachers, this means having meaningful conversations with your students about American anti-Black racism.



"I liked the posters better than the music."
—Robert Crumb, *California Dreams*

Been trying to write this one for a couple weeks—wanted it to be some epic diarrhea-of-consciousness type deal about the search for hidden treasures and the feeling of emptiness one is left with once they're found, all related to the fact that someone recently uploaded the entire run of *Slash* fanzine on thee interweb, but I guess I ate one too many burgers, so this will have to be a shorter, more modest thing, with random thoughts about random things happening in the world of French punk.

First, the Zone Infinie 12" is out now, and if you send me some money I'll send you a copy, as I have fifty or so lying around in my room. I've covered this band before, so I'll be quick and just say it's my record of the year so far and a bunch of people in town seem to agree. The music is amazing—real songs, real guts, lyrics about fighting back and not giving up and the bitterness of it all, hanging out late at night in the streets with decadent freaks, making promises and breaking them and ending up with blood on your hands, with real guitar and bass hooks, and a genuine "spirit," for lack of a better term. But the best part is to have been able to witness the struggle of some of these guys over the years, from their old band Toujours Rien to this, to finally come up with this flawless album. I'm far from being the specialist on this type of "traditional" French punk (or on anything for that matter) so I'll just say this: thankfully it doesn't *exactly* sound like Camera Silens or Warrior Kids, but fans of both bands should definitely check it out, and get ready to be hooked.

If you're interested in current French punk bands singing in French, instead of listening to trendoïd-Oi! with nationalistic tendencies you could all go to Brest in the Northwest of French Brittany and check out Coupe Gorge, Syndrome 81 and Litovsk, who all happen to be based in that grey rainy city I've never been to. Again, I'm not the most knowledgeable person on any of these bands, but they all sound good, and to my knowledge they're not flag-waving idiots.

Coupe Gorge is, I think, the youngest of all three. They sound like the French answer to the North American answer to UK Oi! in the early '80s, i.e. Negative Approach and "skinhead hardcore," with a sound that feels both modern and timeless, like it's not trying to be something, it just is. Some moments are more melodic than others, like the chorus to their mid-tempo song "Violence," but it's mostly up-tempo, with gang vocals that sound tough but not ridiculously so, and basically something for everyone—the youth can start shit up in the pit, the elderly can drink their pint with their elbow on the counter, and the others can just stand there with their arms crossed if they wish, endlessly complaining it's all been done before. They only have a demo tape so far, five songs with names in French that translate to "Hate," "The Night" and "Civil War." It was self-released in France but there's also a U.S press on Brain Abuse records from Falls Church, VA.

That same label also re-released the Syndrome 81 demo tape. What's up with that? I mean, American labels releasing French bands? This reminds me of a decade ago, when my old mate Romain (who runs the great anarcho-punk blog Terminal Sound Nuisance; check it out!) and I were joking about the fact that maybe one day North American "punks" would start listening to Bérurier Noir, use drum-machines, dress like clowns and become fire eaters. Seemed very unlikely then—a bit less today.

Anyway, being from the same city, Syndrome

81 may or may not share members with Coupe Gorge (now that's some in-depth investigation for y'all) or hang with them at the bar. Unlike Coupe Gorge, there's barely a trace of hardcore in their songs, it's 90% melodic, moody street punk. And I'm not using this term just to avoid the Oi! word but because the song I'm listening to right now really *is* about the streets, the urban hell or urban wasteland or what have you. The music's actually as sad and epic as it's about The Fight, and they cover Blitz in French, too—a move that's reminiscent of a long tradition around here, as back in the days it was pretty common for French singers to cover English standards *but* translated to French, so that it would make sense for the hexagonal public, and that's something I'm supporting 100%. (As a sidenote, I recently saw another great new French band, Diktat, covering "Animal Liberation" by Mob 47 in French, and boy did it work.)

That Blitz cover is actually not from Syndrome 81's demo tape, but from their recently released split 7" with Litovsk. Now, if Coupe Gorge and Syndrome 81 are the "traditional side" of a new wave of something that starts and ends with "Oi! Oi! Oi!", then Litovsk are its slightly more experimental side. They describe themselves as a mix of post-punk and Oi! (yeah, you read that correctly) and what they mean, I think, is that they play Oi! songs but with clean guitars with reverb, almost like a post-surf band, or like two bands rolled into one. It shouldn't work, but it kinda does. On their aforementioned split 7" they've got a song called "Brest," and that's when I realized they were *also* from that city (Before that, I thought they were from Lille). They also play an ultra-catchy song called "Holding On," which is so good I was a bit bummed to realize it was a cover, originally by the Burial (*not* the dubstep one, mind you). Their first tape was released by Symphony Of Destruction, a French label and distro also based in Brest, which also released records by the likes of Generacion Suicida, Catholic Spit, etc.

Lastly I think I should mention another thing from Brest, and that's a fanzine called *Neons*. It's made by Raph, who used to run another zine called *Sex Before Suicide* (and before that, another one called *No Hope*). Well, *Neons* is like the follow-up to all of this, and it's definitely one of a kind, and not for everyone, but I'm sure the more "experimental" readers of *MRR* could dig it. And by that I don't mean that he's covering weird music, but weird lifestyles. In his first two issues, Raph has covered things like that crazy Oz sweatpants-wearing skinhead called Meatdog, bestiality in non-porn movies (and yeah, by "bestiality" he actually means "fucking with animals"), porn actress/etc. Annie Sprinkle, the singer from that French metalcore band Kickback, and so on, with sick collages and a killer layout, etc. Again, this is not for everyone, but fans of violent B/Z-movies and people generally looking for "something else" would do themselves a favor by getting a copy. I think it's available through Feel It Records and maybe Negative Jazz in the USA.

ENDNOTES:

1) Wondering why I chose that Robert Crumb quote to open this column? Well, that's because when I'm at work I can *read* about bands but not *listen* to them, so I started writing about these bands from Brest *before* I actually heard them. And as usual, I liked my idea of them better than I liked them, even if they're all pretty cool. Real journalism, I'm tellin' ya!

2) Diggin' the guitar sound on that recent CCTV 7"? Check out Incontrollados from Denmark—underrated late '90s/early '00s Danish punk band, their 7" should be easy to get for cheap. Just sayin'.

3) I recently drew a new shirt for Negative Guest List records from Australia, and I'll draw another one in the coming months. Interested parties can get 'em through the Eternal Soundcheck online store.

4) If you do a music fanzine or an underground comic type zine, send it to me and I'll mention it in this space. Ratcharge@gmail.com if interested.

i don't think that i need to sit here with you fucking dildos any more

by Imogen Binnie

If you're a regular reader of this column, you may have noticed that the last couple months have been *Maximum Feelings* magazine instead of *Maximum Rocknroll* magazine. Look: feelings aren't punk. But don't worry about it. I freaked out and quit my job while Mercury was in retrograde, which derailed pretty much all of the plans my girlfriend and I had for the rest of our lives, but I think I made the right call. Either way, I'm feeling kind of less fucked up? So fuck feelings. Feelings are for assholes! This month, I have an objective scientific fact that I want to talk about. It is the fact that bass rules and guitars are shit.

My first real favorite band was Faith No More. I started shaving steps into the undercut on the sides of my head in middle school so I could look more like Mike Patton. Do you want to know why? It was because the bass part at the beginning of their song "Falling To Pieces" was *the coolest fucking thing I'd ever heard.*

It's Faith No More bass player Billy Gould's fault that I spent a decade buying and then not listening to Mike Patton's weird experimental solo voice albums, and that I spent a good chunk of my life hopelessly devoted to Kid606, an abrasive electronic glitchcore musician who put out an album on Patton's Ipecac label at one point and is still around and that I spent my most toxic musicologist asshole years pushing my glasses up my nose in order to explain why Mr. Bungle was right and the Red Hot Chili Peppers were wrong in the beef those two bands shared for like a decade.

WHO CARES. I was so fucking stoked on that Faith No More bass sound when I was a kid that I used to turn on my combination tape/CD/radio boombox just to play that intro, like, when I was only going to be in my room for a couple seconds, to grab a Dean R. Koontz book or something. Picture me, right, a pudgy little dork working on growing a mullet, flipping out at four seconds of music. It might have been the first bit of music that I was legitimately obsessed with. Like Aerosmith or Run DMC or Twisted Sister or whatever I had been into before that had made me feel stoked and stuff but it was that Faith No More bass part—it was like, "boyeeoing, boyeeoing,"—that made me feel like I might have to bash my face against a wall or something so I could stop feeling overwhelmingly stoked feelings about it. You know? That thing?

Faith No More made me be like "I want to play bass" but my dad, who had played in bands when he was younger (including one called King Kong and the Hairy Toenails, which probably featured a fucking guitar—no recordings survive so it's hard to know for sure) and I guess followed the Grateful Dead around for a while at one point, was like, "First learn to play guitar, then if you still want to play bass after that you can switch." So I learned to play guitar. I played guitar in a few bands and I played bass in a few and now that I am seventy-five years old here is the wisdom that I have learned: fuck guitars. Bass rules, guitars drool.

Here is one thing: bass is easier to play than guitar. All you have to do is squeeze the fucking thing with one hand and hit it with the other. You don't have to play more than one note at a time unless you want to. Simple. We live in a patriarchal culture that privileges "skill" or whatever so bass gets pushed aside and look, I guess it is true that if you are one person accompanying yourself at solo shows then bass is kind of a weird choice to accompany yourself with. But you should not be playing solo shows! Go read *Maximum Boring Folk* if you want to play solo shows. Either make a friend who has some drums or download Ubuntu Studio and program yourself up a friend on your computer; you can EQ a bass to take up all the space in the mix and then you don't need a guitar at all.

Here is another thing: we live in a culture that thinks guitars are more important and that bass should just get the fuck out of the way and let guitars do whatever they fuck they want—like basses should play root notes so guitars can play third inversion suspended chords or solos in mixolydian modes or whatever the fuck. But if you get rid of the guitar then you have all this room for the bass to do, like, the best parts of White Zombie songs, or to be Joy Division—when I was making that nonprofit industrial complex money I also bought the same chorus pedal that Peter Hook uses because I'm a music jock now, I hang out in guitar stores judging people for having cheap "gear"—or just to fucking play power chords that are way lower than the ones you can play on a guitar! That rules!

I think guitars are kind of like dudes in this way: they're everywhere, they're loud, they think they're smarter and cooler than they actually are, and magazines fucking flip out about them all the time even when they're boring and stupid. Whereas basses are like girls, because basses are kind of always there too, but they actually are cool, and people don't give 'em the credit they deserve, and they act like they're taking your shit but really they're taking notes so they can fucking wreck you later.

Drums are chill buddies of any gender.

Uh, like I said, I freaked out and quit my job while Mercury was in retrograde. But before I did that I was making grown-up money which I spent on a Bass Big Muff and can I just tell you how much better my life has been since then? I was too busy having panicky feelings to tell you about it in this column it but a couple of

months ago my band Correspondences recorded this really long song we made up called "Frost Heaves" in Burlington with our friend Kelly from Stick Shift Recordings and Gorgon and Doll Fight and uh, I guess I kind of took my bass apart because I assumed that I knew how to put in new pickups. Turns out that is not a skill I have. So I was playing Kelly's bass, not mine. But I still got to play a bass through a big amp with a fucking Bass Big Muff and it was like everything that had ever been fucking wrong in my fucking life had been fucking remedied.

I hadn't known it could be like that.

When I played chords they sounded clear and it was louder when I played harder and quieter when I played less hard and look, that song is fifteen fucking minutes long and the end has this long build where by the end my fingers are locked into a inflexible claw (I'm not a big practicer) and I have to hunch over and headbutt the fucking thing to play the riff, but I didn't care at all! Fuck my body and muscles, the bass sounded like it was going to literally destroy the walls. You can't do that on a guitar and if you do—if you tune your guitar down low enough to do that shit—guess what buddy, sorry to have to tell you this, but you are now in Staind or Disturbed or some other fucking nu-metal band. When a bass does it it's punk as fuck, though. Even if you're playing epic sludge metal and your band has a cello instead of a guitar.

Don't ask me, man. I don't make the rules.

But like I said, you can play chords on that thing. People are always like, "Get out of the way with bass chords, chords are for guitars." But the world needs more ominous arpeggiated bass chords before the fast parts for contrast; I feel like that went out of fashion with screamo but dude, you should fucking hear that all the time. It sounds like you are whaling on the low fucking piano strings or something! You know? Put a little chorus on that, turn out the basement lights, and the five idiots stupid enough to come to your weird band's show will literally feel nauseated by your thumping glory.

I guess my point is just that kids are smart and I was wise as hell to recognize that bass rules when I was super young and not get all brainwashed by our cultural narrative about guitars being cool. And I mean I'm not even that stoked on Faith No More anymore. (Although they did put out a new album this year and it's not even embarrassing. The chorus to the song "Motherfucker" is like the funnest thing to sing along with, you just holler out "helloooooo motherrrrrrrfuckerrrrr." But this is not *Maximum Reunited Alt-Metal* magazine.) I just have felt so stoked about bass my whole life and I need to come out about it. Also I'm stoked I'm feeling so stoked about bass right now because guess what, Girls Rock Camp starts in two weeks and I am teaching bass and coaching bands and we are only doing Downtown Boys songs in bass class this year! I feel so lucky that I get to teach girls how to play bass because bass rules and girls rule and everything else is the *worst*.

For more information about bands that rule and are mostly just basses and drums which also have members who are not dudes, please investigate Groke, Street Eaters, and Dearth, off the top of my head. Trust me. It's a thing. I'm stoked for it to be the dominant punk paradigm for a decade 'til we're all super sick of it and we can move onto bands that are just theremins and this instrument Emily told me about which is a cello crossed with a didgeridoo because by then it will be the future and how fucking futuristic will that sound.

I dunno man. Watch this space. I think what is actually going on right now is that I think I started a new band that is mostly just bass and drums and yelling (and some keyboards?) and the more I think about it the more I'm like, "This is such a good idea!" I keep having awesome ideas for songs now that I don't have to worry about getting the bass out of the way, you know? Talk to me in six months and we'll see how it shakes out, but in the meantime, fuck guitars forever. I'm serious.

ENDNOTES:

1) When I say "feelings are for assholes," I don't mean it in a body-negative way, like associating the human asshole with badness. I mean it in a body-positive way. I know that butt stuff isn't for everybody, but if you've never tried it maybe you should think about it. Anal stimulation feelings rule and that is why feelings are for assholes.

2) If you're all, "But basses are a kind of guitar, they're bass *guitars*," you're being a pedant right now and pedantry isn't punk, you fucking herb. Enthusiasm is.

3) In case you managed to forget, America is still a racist hellscape.

4) Correspondences is jumping on the Ragana tour for a chunk of the east coast and northeast US in the beginning of September! I am so fucking stoked. There're probably specifics on the internet or something if you like music that rules but if that's not you that's fine.

Most of you probably know that on June 17th a shitty little white supremacist walked in to one of the most important African-American churches in America and murdered nine people. Said shitty little white power dude was directly inspired and radicalized by the writings of other white supremacists and neo-Nazis. So hey, the next time somebody tells you that they only listen to SKREWDRIVER for the music and they don't care about the lyrics, you tell them that they're full of shit. Because they are. Words have power, sometimes extraordinary power, and this creeping acceptance if not outright glamorization of white power music that's beginning to pop up at the fringes of the punk scene these days is *not acceptable*. It's not "edgy" or "funny" to wear a racist band's shirt or rock their tunes in your bedroom or support that agenda in any way. Shitty little WP killer's friends all though it wasn't a big deal that he told racist "jokes" and talked about killing Black people. They should have known better. It's 20-fucking-15, there's no need to have this conversation again: either you're on team racist mass-murder or you're a decent fucking human being. Put your stupid fucking HATE FOREST shirt in the garbage (next to the Confederate flag), drag your BRUTAL ATTACK mp3 to the trash folder and grow the fuck up. And if you've got friends or acquaintances who are dabbling in that shit, tell them the truth: it's not okay.

Of all the stuff I have to write about this month, the RUSTED's *Fran Den Morka Haran* CD most perfectly captures my current mood. I first became aware of this band thanks to their amazing tracks on the *Get Back Our Future: Tsuyama City Punk Omnibus* CD, where they stood out in an amazingly stacked lineup that included heavyweights like DEATH DUST EXTRACTOR and SKITZOPHRENIA. It took a couple of listens for me to realize that the five songs on the new CD are actually better than those earlier tracks. The old stuff was very, very straightforward ASTA KASK-style punk with a downbeat edge, while this new stuff is a little more complex and, for lack of a better word, mannered. This band has an amazing ability to write clean, simple guitar hooks that get endlessly stuck in your head, every song has a part that is so striking in its catchiness that it seems impossible that it wasn't lifted from a canonical tune. It's all done in minor keys, definitely reminicent of NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS at times, but still primarily rooted in the melodic, anthemic ASTA KASK style. The label blurb mentions the VICIOUS and MASSHYSTERI, but I don't really get the comparison, as those bands were very influenced by '80s American stuff and the RUSTED are only getting those influences second or third-hand, if they are at all. That being said, if you like those bands there's just enough crossover stylistically that you should seek out this CD. Every song is fucking great, but the title track and "Brannande" are (at least at the moment) personal favorites. Plus they're selling it for the crazy low price of 800 yen (most of the "big" Japanese hardcore bands' CDs go for 2500/3000) so it's not much of an investment to lay out either. (Classick Records, contact the band at jag-vet-inget@softbank.ne.jp)

CV Records cranked out a handful of fucking fantastic cassette releases in the last couple of months, all of which are worth at least touching on here. The one that's probably gotten the most attention is the NARCOESTADO demo, and perhaps that's inevitable as it definitely hits on what's kind of big right now in the world of punk. Featuring members of almost all the best Mexican punk bands going, NARCOESTADO have a style that effortlessly joins the best of early '80s UK, Spanish and Mexican punk. Definitely feeling the BLITZ influence as much as the ESKORBUTO or REBEL'D PUNK in the mix. There's a kind of melancholy sweetness to this that's incredibly infectious, it's a recording that you can't listen to just once. The gritty recording is definitely a plus—songs this well-written benefit from a little bit of grime around the edges lest they become too purely poppy. This is a release that should appeal to a massive swath of *MRR* readers, from post-punk fans to hardcore rippers. It's timeless and brilliant and you should get it immediately and hope that there's more coming. (CV Records, 1184 East 13th Ave, Vancouver BC V5T2M1,

Canada, cvrecs.storenvy.com)

One thing that Chile's IGNORANTES don't have to worry about is being mistaken for a pop band. *Their Olor A Cuero Rancio, Vino Y Raja* ("The Smell of Rotten Leather, Wine and Ass") demo is fucking nasty slice of hardcore punk that exists in that exalted space between scenes. The bands that they give the nod to in the liner notes run the gamut from DISORDER to MASSACRE 68 to GAUZE, and there's hints of all and none of the above in the mix here. I gather these dudes are antisocial weirdoes who don't play much and don't like people very well, and that definitely comes across in both the misanthropic lyrical approach and the all-over-the-place writing. It's instantly identifiable as "raw punk" but it's definitely not easily pigeonholed as inspired by this or that specifically. The drums go "1-2, 1-2", the (sometimes hilariously high-pitched) vocals spit venom, the bass mostly follows the muddy, rudimentary guitar riffs and everything gels together to create one hell of a compelling recording. It's incredibly liberating to stop giving a shit what people think, and these recordings are definitely proof of that. (CV Records)

The KOLUMNA BURRUTI tape is probably the least heralded of the CV bunch and definitely does not deserve to languish in obscurity. Because he's not busy enough as it is, DHK and RATAS RABIOSAS main man Severino has produced this solo album (there are a shitload of songs on this thing!), written, played and even illustrated solely by the man himself. Naturally, it's fucking great. Super-raw primitive hardcore that's fueled by equal parts early Scandi-worship and South American punk sensibilities, with killer lyrics opposing Coca-Cola and former Peruvian President Aberto Fujimori while supporting DIY culture, coca leaf chewing and (I think?) Cliff from ANTI-CIMEX. Most songs are mid-tempo bangers, driven by the guttural vocals and absolutely classic sounding riffs, and the design on this thing is to die for. You'd never know it was a 2015 release if you stumbled across it in a shop, you'd think you were getting a great deal on a lost '80s gem. Man, I wish everything I tried turned out nearly as well as it does for Severino, he's already got two killer bands and now it turns out he rules all by himself! Amazing. (CV Records)

Back in the day, the island of Kyushu was a pretty big deal in the Japanese hardcore scene (duh), producing some of the absolute finest bands that any region has ever produced, including the mighty CONFUSE and GAI. Well, time didn't stop in the '80s, and the new *Extraordinary?* compilation EP brings together six younger Kyushu bands to prove that the southern Japanese scene is still going strong. I am a big believer in regional compilations, especially when every cut is as good as what is presented here. END OF POLLUTION vomit forth some well, extraordinarily blown-out crust that borders on crasher territory, with intense male/female vocals, PERVERSE perfectly capture the Discrete Records style of tough hardcore à la POISON COLA or FALSE CHARGE, CRUDIA deliver a track that would have been one of the top jams on their recent CD, with gales of feedback whining over a rock-solid hardcore track with a completely unhinged vocal attack. ADA round out the comp with a surprising but kind of great '90s emo song that save for the female vocals could pass for a lost FLASHBULB MEMORY or THERE IS A LIGHT THAT NEVER GOES OUT recording. The DECIDE and UNEQUAL REALITY contributions are solid as well, but these four songs in particular are worth any punk's time, emo and all. (Hoito Records, no contact info)

New York's Alright came and went and once again I missed a chance to see some amazing Japanese bands (and some okay New York arty ones, I guess), but at least I got ahold of the RAW DISTRACTIONS *Raw Fight Tour* flexi EP that was released for their appearance at the fest. RAW DISTRACTIONS are quietly but doggedly becoming one of the very best hardcore bands in the world, and I'm very glad that they got the chance to shine overseas, even if your humble narrator wasn't in attendance. This might be their very best material yet, a perfect union of tough hardcore and punk melody, with hooks for days and incredible drive. All three songs are absolute killers, from the catchy chorus of "Raw Fight" to the ridiculous bass break that ends "Zigsaw" and leads seamlessly into "Police". Plus, the design of this thing is just fucking amazing, a perfectly timeless piece of punk art. Amazingly, despite being limited to 300 there are still a few copies of this gem floating around in a few distros and you'd be a fool not to pick one up. Also, if anybody has a copy of the ISTERISMO flexi that was also available at the NYA fest that they're willing to part with, please drop me a line! (Hardcore Survives, hardcore-survives.com, Pogo and Cry)

Indonesia's LOCK OFF are a defiantly drunk punk band in a country that's not super-tolerant of either punx or drunx, and thanks to Pogo 77 their fantastic *Fuck the System* demo tape has gotten a pretty good bit of distribution around the world. This is overtly political stuff, eschewing the normal stylistic obsessions of drink and having a good time to take six hard shots at the system via songs like "Fuck Off Government", "Punk Against Police" and "Religious Authority". Musically this is grounded in the harder side of UK'82, with a definite ULTRA VIOLENT meets MAU MAUS vibe. Members trade off lead vocals which keeps the sound fresh, and drummer Andrash is a fuckin' beast, constantly delivering huge full-kit rolls and just generally driving the band's hard punk attack. Even if this weren't an important recording because of the context in which it was made, this would still be one of the best straight-up punk demos of the year. Try not to sing along with the trade-off vocals on "Violent Country," I dare you (and dig that perfect four-bar solo!). The first edition of this tape was limited to 100, and hopefully demand is such that there will be a second pressing shortly. Note: the track listing on the tape in no way reflects the actual order in which the songs are presented. Drunk Nori strikes again! (Pogo 77, pogo77.com)

Lastly, we have an unexpected and kind of amazing out of left field record. RUKKUS were a bunch of South Bay kids that were into the whole raw punk revival thing (following in the footsteps of the criminally underrated ROTTEN FUX) well before that was the cool thing to do. And goddamn did they do it well. This is vicious Japanese hardcore worship, hitting the sweet spot of *Damnation*-era GAI very hard, with crazed reverb drenched Cherry ZOUO vocals, splattering buzzsaw guitars and perfect bouncing bass lines. It's dark, it's angry and it pays tribute to the masters without ever lifting a riff or sounding overly derivative. It's important to note that the warm and stylistically perfect recording was done by the late Jeff Davis, an absolute master in the recording studio who we are all poorer for having lost. Thankfully, bass player Kelly (now of *Aseptic* zine and PEROXIDE) held onto this recording and has finally made it available to the public, and just in the nick of time for yours truly as I think I killed my copy of their demo CD-r by playing it too much. I hope that this record shocks and shames a lot of the bands that are aping this style poorly, RUKKUS were the real deal and it's a shame that their only proper non-demo release is coming out many years into an indefinite hiatus. At least I had the privilege of sharing the bill on their last performance to date with my shitty old band.

You can reach me via *MRR* or at agunderwood@gmail.com, and seriously: somebody hook me up with that fuckin' ISTERISMO flexi!

Last month I was writing about changing definitions of home and this month I am here in the place I grew up, Hunterdon County, New Jersey, in all this green and heat. Discovering why so many people I love are still here, and humbling myself to what I can still get out of being here. I am open to loving this place in new ways and reliving old ways which served me, despite the fact that when I go to a coffee shop on the Fourth of July to wait for my friend Jeff to pick me up, older white people and younger white people stare at me like I am besmirching their town and potentially the nation. I want to say, "I've never seen you before but I fucking grew up here, man! People were used to seeing my purple-haired crippled and tattooed and raggedy ass crossing the bridge over the river."

Growing up in a small, largely rural town surrounded by other small largely rural towns, you learn to either blend in or stick out with a vengeance. My mom has asked me many times over the years why I chose to dress and present myself so ostentatiously, including painting my face, dyeing my hair, getting a large tattoo as soon as I was eighteen, acting disorderly with my friends, loving punk rock. I used to answer pretty defensively. Saying there was nothing wrong with what I was doing. And all my other friends are doing it. And punk is cool. And tattoos are beautiful. And rebellion from independent thinkers is to be expected in such an oppressively homogenous little suburban-forested bubble. And fuck you or whatever! Now a large part of my heated chest does feel the shape of the words, fuck you or whatever, but there are

new answers too. Unlike a lot of other people like me, I have the privilege of having many family members and a hometown area that wants to grow with me, ask me questions in more loving ways, and show me things I may have missed.

When I'm visiting home, during a sticky summer like now, in 2015, armed with nuanced ideas and the words of friends in the Bay and Seattle who practice clear, direct nonviolent communication, direct action, write communiques and go to rowdy shows, I feel a bit more confident in my representation of my values and my gender and my race and my body. Amidst recovering from panicky moments where I watch the lightning bug lit up treeline and listen to my mom whom I adore asking why I really did choose to tattoo not only my arms and my legs but my hands and my face, why I did choose to make myself even more of an abrasive visage than the other unintentional aspects of my marginalized body would have made me, and I think that I am perhaps fifteen again and live here and don't know what kind of a liveable life will ever look like, I feel a new and peculiar calm, and an ability to answer those questions, among others, and ask some of my own.

The first person I ever saw who had tattoos was my cousin Sarah. She was a role model of mine for a time, following my mom. She's over six feet tall and blonde, with an athletic build, and pixieish features centered in a broad moon face. One summer when I was nine, she was visiting my grandmother from where her and her siblings and parents lived in Ontario, Canada, and I found out she had a dragon tattooed across her scalp beneath her ponytail. As well as ones on her legs and arms. My mom is an art teacher and a painter, and I always drew as a kid, so I was interested in art of any kind. I liked to paint on my own face and body, and the concept of permanent body art impressed me. Sarah taught me French and croquet, so it seemed extremely possible to me that classy grown-up ladies had tattoos. What I think about now though is the fact that when I was a child, and growing into adolescence and young adulthood, virtually none of my female role models were black or brown. Forget disabled. My dad is black, my mom is white and blonde—while I adored my dad and reached out to him to relate on many topics, I always imagined and hoped I would grow into my mother somehow. I don't know what I thought would happen, but internalized racism and ableism works wonders.

My friends and I all got tattoos in high school. Ones sharing the same phrase, "We know," because we were all blood and cabaret and love lovin' punks known as Infernites, World Inferno Friendship Society bandaids/fans/cult followers. Mine is on my left pec/tit over my heart, underlined with a cheesy peace rose. I drew the rose originally, and my mom remarked affectionately that my drawing made the little rose look like a happy lion, with the two leaves below the blossom mane like paws, poised in a prance. My mom was always finding animals, living ones, and ones living inside of people and images. Unfortunately the tattoo artist I got was not very attentive or interested in my chosen image, and casually penned what he decided a rose looked like rather than copying mine. At eighteen I didn't know to talk with him about it, to question his approach to get the image I wanted, so I settled while he shook my boob with his needle, looking away frequently to talk with other people, potentially hoping I would disappear into the petals of my rose. That being said I don't regret that tattoo for a second. I don't regret any of my dozen or so tattoos, including the ones on my face, which resemble antlers, fern fronds, river tributaries, butterfly antenna. I don't think my mom guessed that my tattoo fascination, or my love of punk and dirty slapstick lovingly imagined DIY culture, would ever go so far. I remember seeing my friend Sara, who was my friend Amelia's sister and older than all of us, with a beginning sleeve of blackberry brambles, and cursive phrases across her collarbone. I felt like I had to catch up! It made me hungry for tattoos. Living in Western Massachusetts, I discovered the stick and poke approach, and quickly took care of my foot ("This wheelchair is a pipe bomb"), my knee ("Knee Jerk"), my hands, and the crease where thigh meets lower belly meets pubic mound, an interpretation of a blown up microscopic scabe (what is the singular of scabies??), in honor and placation of that time my house got scabies, three times.

My mother interprets excess, ostentatiousness, flamboyance, "doing too much", as a manifestation of anxiety. The other day my uncle and I were discussing Michael Jackson (internalized racism and trauma), and Rachel Dolezal (avoidance of white guilt, white fragility, and relationship to white supremacy), two very different examples of changing the skin you live in. My uncle is black and queer, and having him still live in New Jersey, in the house he and my father and their other brother grew up in, has always been a solace and an inspiration to me when I visit home and we discuss love, family history, politics, identity. While we didn't discuss body modification in terms of tattoos and piercings, he did say, "Changing your body like that indicates that you have some deep insecurities and issues with who you are." Now, I had to catch him there. I identify as genderfluid/multigender, and used to identify as a transman (I have had a breast reduction which I also refer to as a top surgery), and my partner is a transman, and the spectrum of radical transpeople are the kind of queer people I generally feel the most relatable to. "But, how does that interpretation of what it means to modify your body apply to transpeople?" I asked. "Oh no, that's different," my uncle says, "that's not a decision to avoid yourself, that's a decision to be who you are, to do just the opposite. It's important that people have the ability to do that." I had never discussed transness with my uncle before, and though we didn't discuss it too much further, I was relieved to hear that he didn't have some pathologizing feelings about medically transitioning.

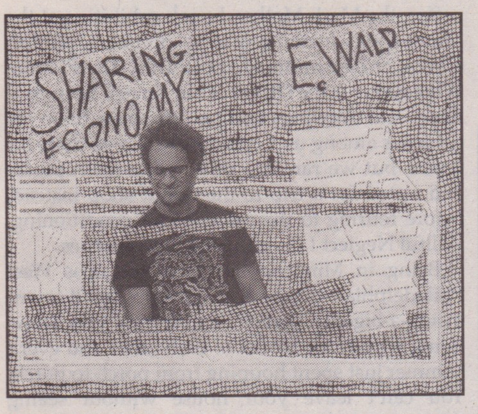
For me, there have always been many blurry lines that are not quite lines between being Black, being mixed race, being visibly disabled, working class/poor, visibly punk, being queer and genderqueer, and somehow having difficulty keeping myself looking clean on a regular basis. I admired girls around me who were normal and girls around me who were alternative/*baaad*, and like Black singers on white TV before me, I copied the looks of white able-bodied girls, no matter how good or bad or well-suited to my body they were. I reject the notion, however, that there are "flattering looks" and "unflattering looks." I also reject the idea that tattoos and body piercings and ostentatious, grating outfit choices are somehow something innovated by white people. You got most of your tattoo, hairstyle, jewelry, and dance ideas from brown countries, so in truth, who were my looks based off of? Some of my people after all? Some of your people? Stretched ears in Ethiopia? Traditional tattoos in Japan? Mohawks? The other night I was watching *Love and Hip Hop Atlanta* on my grandma's TV, and Margeux and Jessica Dime and others had tattoo sleeves, shaved parts of their heads, huge hats, lots of makeup, and pushed up breasts in tight bright dresses. Looks I craved when I was in high school and now emulate quite well. And make no mistake, there are tons of gorgeous, queer, tattooed Black punks just like me. When I start to feel guilty and funny about making myself even less relatable to my pseudo-conservative to progressive white New Jersey family than I was when I was born, I take a deep breath, look around, and try to remember that I was born cut off from worlds which I didn't know I needed. I do think that I got tattoos and dyed my hair and painted my face initially as a fascination with otherworldly (other-world) beauty, next as a fuck you to people who would stare at my anyway, next as a bit of a disassociation from my own body and my misinterpretation of my inspiration and origins, and more lately, as a commitment to the look and communities I have chosen. Last night at the Country Griddle, the only bar in town, I ran into a girl I had grown up with. At eleven she had risen out of the hot tub our friends were critiquing their bodies in, golden brown, short, and muscled to say, "I like my body just the way it is!" I found her inspirational when all of the other skinny, pale girls with no pubic hair were saying how everyone has to shave and lose weight and pluck their eyebrows to be likeable. She now has two shaved sides of her head, a green flippy plume, and tattoos on her arms. Her personality is much the same. We have never stayed in touch, but I hugged her hard. I would like, even though I have some anger towards my hometown, that my look could not be interpreted as antagonism by the people I love. But to be honest, what would I have had to do to not be be read as semi-antagonistic in such a homogenous place?

Questions for everyone: Do you have tattoos all over your freaking body? Are you a trans person or a queer person or a disabled person or a person of color? Are you connected amicably to your family? How do they respond to you? Do you care?

Inaccessibility shout-out: Clinton, New Jersey.

Accessibility shout-out: My partner's house in Seattle, which now, proudly, hosts a gorgeous ramp.

ENDNOTES:
My ability to review shows and venues is dependent on my access to them, so accessibility shout-outs might apply to things other than show spaces. But I'm still tryna get in touch with the now dormant Bad Smut. Email me at foxlovesriver@gmail.com!



What the fuck is up planet earth, my name is Eli; welcome to my zone of sick and twisted reality.

I was anointed the distribution coordinator of this trade publication just over six months ago, but the real story that brings us here begins in 1990. I began the punishing cycle of human existence right here in San Francisco, California about twenty-five years ago. My sister let me borrow a burned CDR of *Various States of Disrepair* when I was twelve. When I was thirteen, I got ripped off by Amazon trying to buy a copy of the Minor Threat discography on CD with a birthday giftcard. At a tender age, I knew that punk was out there, and that both the truth and the lie were contained therein.

At some point I thought I could try and understand, if not live, punk life in the city of San Francisco. I lost track and squandered my adolescence somewhere between Dolores Park and Warmwater Cove. At the age of eighteen, on a whimsical lark, I sent myself out to Manhattan for a miserable four years where I exchanged what was left of my dignity and self-esteem for a piece of paper signed by an investment finance guru. By 2012 I was done and moved back to San Francisco for good, feeling like a wet rag of grief, angst, and misguided ambitions. New York's alright.

It became more and more obvious each time I came back; without me, San Francisco had become utterly fucked. Nothing made sense anymore. Pupusa shops had become record stores, record stores had become savory turnover patisseries; jocks had become punks, punks had become ballistics engineers. There were a few constants however: Taquería Can-Cún was still there on Nineteenth and Mission, and down the block and across the street you could still go to and probably book a show pretty easily at Sub-Mission (FKA Balazo Gallery).

But would you go there? Another constant in my window of experience: the all-ages situation in this city has been real grim. I'll try to narrow my focus here on a few salient experiences I've taken in over the last few weeks, but given my feelings on the subject I'll probably end up trailing off into something corny and sanctimonious.

This whole train of thought started a couple weeks ago, when I got to sit in with fellow born-and-bred San Franciscan Max Wickham and help interview Pure Disgust, my favorite capital-H HC band. The median age of that band is twenty, meaning there's only one place beyond Sub-Mission they could even play in San Francisco. If that space is gone, there's nothing left a band could go to without a booking agent—let somewhere from which they could build their own scene and go on a thirty-six day US tour before turning seventeen. House shows don't exist here on any regular basis. Most tenants are too worried about getting kicked out to take on the liability. A few spaces can put on shows for a few months without getting too much heat, but they are fewer and increasingly far between. There are at least a couple in the city which do shows every couple of months, but at this point I'm too paranoid to blow them up in print without getting in touch beforehand.

Sub-Mission's last show ever, according to various first-and-secondhand sources, was July 11th. After multiple rumored closures and Indiegogo campaigns, the space is closing for real. The venue would need to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars to cover expenses for San Francisco's Department of Building Inspection before even getting to consider renewing their lease, obviously out of the question for a space like this. These are fragile institutions we find ourselves in trying to make music on DIY terms, this magazine included. Naturally all institutions have finite lifespans (this magazine excluded!), but it is alarming when the death rate outpaces the birthrate as suddenly as it has here. This was one a handful of art spaces I could go to as a clueless teenager and see bands I will not name here (I'm trying to work on a good first impression, y'all). Without even getting on BART, there were at least four venues that I could have turned to as a teenager, but each of them has gone under at this point without anything having come up to replace them.

Part of the fragility of these venues is the ecosystem they've ended up in. I mean who would have imagined in 2001 post-Pets.com/Webvan that there would be even more money in using the Internet to buy pet food and groceries? But another part of it is the simple fact that these institutions are also at the mercy of their custodians. To have any hope of a future, their management can't be anything less than uncompromisingly organized and relentlessly dedicated to community outreach.

I'll credit the Sub-Mission staff as being perfectly kind and helpful for some of my friends and I in attending and booking shows, but at the same time I'm not sure how easy it could be to develop a lasting relationship with the venue. While they "always were cool to me, man," there were a few bitter pills to swallow. You could either do a 50-50 split or do an up-front deposit to book, which could be prohibitive to the broke teens that need this space the most. You may or may not get a breakdown at the end of the night. Even for high profile shows, they could be difficult to reach, sometimes not following up for over a week after repeated attempts to reach them via phone or email. They also had a projector there that seemed to run a constant montage loop of sexploitation trailers all night whether you'd want them to or not, a tacky and tactless backdrop for any band. Some friends of mine in their mid-twenties were pretty pissed about having to play their first show as an all-female band with that kind of backdrop and I can't imagine a band of women ten years younger than them being stoked on it either. That's the club's aesthetic decision I suppose, and it's not like I could walk into a membership meeting and tell them how to run their club. Obviously, it was a paradigm that worked for a lot of people for a long time since it began in the '90s, but it is a drag for that to be the only one, arguably even worse to not be an option at all.

Anyway, I didn't go to that last Sub-Mission show. In fact, I wasn't even in San Francisco. Instead, I was about 60 miles south at the Think and Die Thinking Festival in San Jose. It was my first time at the fest, but in my limited time there I soaked up a lot more than I could relate in just one column—so stay tuned. In a lot of ways it also felt like the opposite of the Sub-Mission experience. Instead of offering a weird club space where younger punks could hang out as long as they could stomach the vibe, this seemed like a space that would work in dialogue with the community it sought out to foster. You can't tell kids what punk is, what it can and can't do, and tell them to deal with it. I mean you can, but good luck; fuck you. More productive would be to let them create it on their own terms. It seems difficult to foster this kind of space in the economically stratified San Francisco of 2015, but then again the median rent in San Jose isn't too far behind what it is here. In short, it is pretty rare to see a festival inspire the kind of courage it takes to for a group of punk teens just grab the mic and get real with a room of strangers. What happens more often in San Francisco is hanging at the Knockout or the Hemlock and feeling like you want to go home and read a book.

Bar shows are easy comforts in challenging times. Thrillhouse Records's unpaid social media intern (or whoever it is that runs their Facebook account) recently pointed out the irony of having the monthly *MRR*/Thrillhouse benefit shows hosted at the Knockout, a 21+ venue. We certainly appreciate the irony. We'd began the shows at all-ages spaces in the city, but for the reasons described above ran out of spaces to host them. In the interest of continuing the shows the magazine and the store, they were moved to the bar. At least it is a nearby spot that employs several Thrillhouse volunteers. But for there to be any kind of musical future in the technocratic futurescape of this city we—this magazine included—need to get more creative. You never know when you're going to wake up and realize you have a clean slate, or nothing at all.

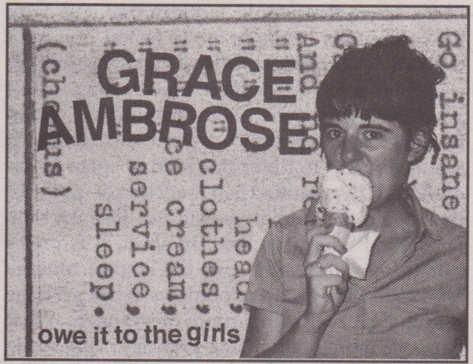
ENDNOTES:

1) I want a focus on live music in the Bay Area to be a running thread in this column. If this is something you're involved with please get in touch! I could obviously fill the entire column space with distro-related stuff, but I think people might lose interest in hearing about my trips to the post office every month. I want to hear about your experiences going to shows, starting bands, finding places to play, creating spaces, etc. Email me at eli@maximumrocknroll.com. I don't get out of the house as much as I used to. There's actually five shows happening tonight but I'm just out here listening to the Execute and *DS2* while writing this column.

2) We still have a few copies of the Los Crudos *Doble Discografía* 2xLP available here at the compound, but once we're sold out it will be *gone forever*. In fact, they may even sell out by the time you get this. Go to store.maximumrocknroll.com for your copy, or email distro@maximumrocknroll.com for bulk orders.

3) After spending countless hours reading the International Mail Manual, we've figured out reduced postage rates for international distributors. If you're interested in carrying at least five magazines to sell at your store, with your distro, or even to split up between your friends, email us for a quote.

4) Do you live in the San Francisco Bay Area? Do you want to get involved with the magazine? Get in touch! It is just Grace and I at the helm right now so there's a lot of work you can do if you want! In particular if you have web design experience (Wordpress/CSS in particular) we *need* your help and will reward you handsomely with all the free coffee you can stomach.



Eight hours ago I was sitting in central air conditioning eating $1 boxes of organic strawberries and listening to the Sex Pistols with newfound punk friends Shivaun and Brendan. Now vacation is over and it's back to the grind. Rolled in the door and sat down at the computer, time to get another issue fully out the door.

I spent the weekend in the Twin Cities with the dual purpose of spending time with my family (my brother lives in St. Paul) and experiencing some Midwestern punk. Saturday afternoon was mostly loitering around Extreme Noise, talking shit at an unadvisable volume ("hardcore ears are everywhere!") and spending more money than I should have on records, books, and zines. (*Banned In DC* reprint is essential, but you knew that already.) Extreme Noise is a sister to *MRR* in many ways—support them when you find yourself in Minnesota and then start an all-volunteer record store in your town!

Saturday night found hundreds of punks crammed into a beautiful woodshop-cum-warehouse for a big gig. I was looking forward to seeing Ivy play but by now I'm sure you've all heard the news...We're dressed in all black over here at the compound (but really, when are we not?), mourning the loss of New York's most interesting band. Get the new 7" to soften the blow. Still, it was one of those ~*gigs of the summer*~ and it seemed like every punk in the city came out of hiding for it. Most people stayed outside (in a cloud of B.O. that you could impressively smell from around the corner, I shit you not!) but we braved the sweltering heat for Lumpy and the Dumpers, always worth it and always a pleasure.

The next morning: brunch (pancakes with wild rice in them!? G'head Modern Times!), coffee, the Mark Mothersbaugh exhibition at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. Someone publish a book of his handmade postcards, ASAP! Man! What group is the DEVO of our times? Save your flyers and drawings and t-shirts cause there are geniuses among us. I could have stayed there for hours, but we ran into other outta-town punks and opted for a trip to the donut shop instead, before retiring to the safety of air conditioning, Willful Neglect LPs, and Sing Sing reissues.

Being in Minneapolis made me miss West Philadelphia—the sort of pseudo small-town-inside-a-big-city reality of everyone you know living within ten blocks of each other and every summer just spent hopping from porch to porch. You can't leave your house without seeing someone you know, equal parts maddening and comforting. That's not how it works here in San Francisco. I'm not sure which way I prefer.

By the time you read this, I'll have lived here for one full year. Here's to a few more.

grace@maximumrocknroll.com

ENDNOTES:

1) See you at Olympia Hardcore Fest?

2) I'd summer in Minnesota.

3) We're still looking for someone to coordinate the magazine with me. We have had a few promising applicants, but maybe you're the perfect match? Get in touch for an application.

4) gSp is the future of music. The people need recordings! More reflections on Epicenter fest and Think and Die Thinking next month, maybe.

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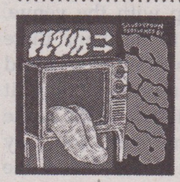

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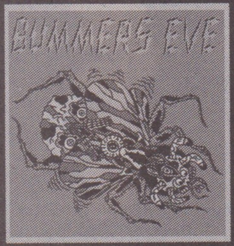

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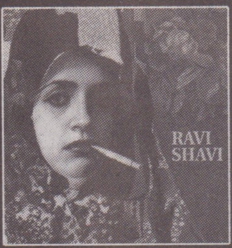

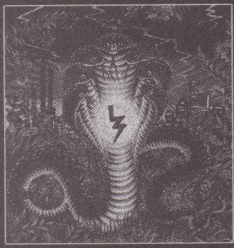

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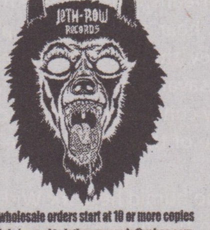

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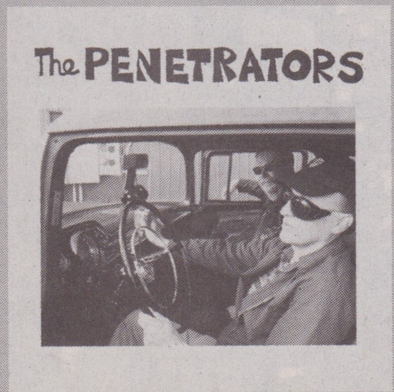

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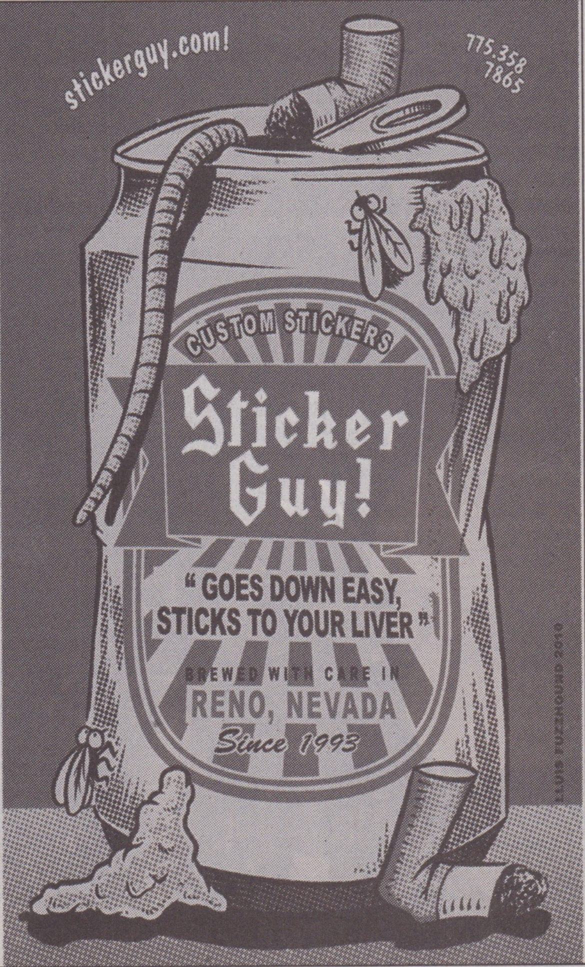


MYSTI
I

MRR: Usually I don't get why band members have to state their names and the instrument they play at the beginning of interviews because what they say is not connected to the role they fill in the band. But who knows, maybe we can beat some sense into this question if you tell us how your personality influences the way you play your instrument in Mystic Inane? Was it clear at the beginning who would play what?

PERRY: I play drums like I cook.

NATHAN: It was totally pre-decided. Candice, you started it and you played guitar and you needed a bass player so I joined, and then you asked Perry to play drums.

PERRY: But you didn't want me to play drums because I left town too much, and now you've left town.

CANDICE: You wanted to play drums and you asked me over and over and I finally said okay.

Perry: I sound so desperate in this scenario!

Jonah: There's no way I could do anything but sing. I wanted there to be a good punk band and I was sad that the original lineup was breaking up, so I had to.

PERRY: So you selflessly...

JONAH: I had to join the band.

CANDICE: It worked for me because Jonah has great taste, and I knew it would turn out to my satisfaction even if he wasn't...

JONAH: A musician?

CANDICE: Experienced...Are you experienced?

MRR: What is the context Mystic Inane writes its songs / you live in? What's the situation?

PERRY: I guess the original, classic context was that Candice, Nathan, and I lived together in a big, disgusting house and Jonah lived in another big, disgusting house.

NATHAN: So we wrote these big, disgusting songs.

JONAH: There have been a lot of national misconceptions about New Orleans, like that we're all total Southern rubes. People hear about a good punk band from the South and they think it must be an anomaly or they must be idiot savants, but it's 2015 and we're all pretty internationally connected with the outside world.

PERRY: Because of the internet? We're living in a global village.

NATHAN: It's too humid here for Wi-Fi.

JONAH: We are the future, we are living in the future, and we don't just live in a swamp cut off from the rest of the world.

NATHAN: A cultural wasteland, as someone once said.

CANDICE: A cultural wasteland! New Orleans! I think the person actually said we were surrounded by a cultural void, which is mindboggling to me because people in the rural areas surrounding New Orleans have food and language and customs that go back hundreds of

C NANE

Mystic Inane hails from New Orleans, a city atop a swamp. They are about to take their brand of intelligent and idiosyncratic hardcore punk on the road, up and down the West Coast of the United States. In advance of that tour, Viktor Vargyai discussed UFOs, USHC, and the subconscious with the band.

Photos provided by Beau Patrick Coulon.

years that cannot be found anywhere else in the world. If that's not culture but your art gallery-infested metropolis is, then I don't know what to say.
PERRY: But I think we are more cut off from trends than people in most cities.
JONAH: But where? Especially us as individuals. It's not like we exist in a vacuum.
CANDICE: I think we operate in a scene that's not constantly challenging us to be something that we're not. We don't have aesthetic standards per se. I mean, people around us have standards of creative quality but not specific aesthetic requirements that make a punk band. So, there's not a lot of competition but that doesn't mean that people don't have taste.

MRR: How is the punk scene in your town and what's your role in it?
PERRY: The punk scene in our town right now is so fucking great. Vatican Dagger is shit.
JONAH: Are you trying to start a war?
PERRY: What do you mean?
JONAH: You said Vatican Dagger is the shit or like shit on our heels?
PERRY: They're the shit. They're a hot band, they got so good.
CANDICE: Cool. Finally the two dueling scenes have been bridged.
PERRY: What is that, uptown and downtown?
CANDICE: No, it's like, an uninformed or imagined antagonism between the bar scene and the... uh...squatted bombed-out strip mall scene.
PERRY: Obviously all of Clayton's bands are good.
JONAH: I feel like there's not a large desire to participate in a national punk scene when bands

start in New Orleans, whereas in other places their intention in being in a punk band is to go on tour and be part of the larger punk dialogue.

CANDICE: Having a record just to have one, before you've really been a band for very long.

PERRY: Because people don't participate in internet culture here. Well, maybe I do.

CANDICE: I think to a large degree that's very true.

PERRY: Like that band Short Leash. I can't imagine those dudes are on the internet very much.

CANDICE: Gals.

JONAH: They're playing with GBH tomorrow.

CANDICE: What? Fuck off!

NATHAN: And Total Chaos.

CANDICE: Oh my god.

PERRY: Our role in it...I don't know. It's hard to answer these questions. Are we trying to be Mystic Inane six months ago? Because we don't really have a role in it right now.

JONAH: Yes we do.

NATHAN: We do.

JONAH: I wanted to join this band to participate in the larger punk dialogue. When touring bands come through and I want to play with them, when bands I like from around the world come, I book their shows.

NATHAN: We all book shows, make flyers, try to find venues, and all that sort of shit.

CANDICE: And we all go see our friends' bands, whether it's a hardcore band or a noise band. I guess we don't really go to like, hippie folk shows.

NATHAN: Sometimes we do...

PERRY: We went to a hippie noise show last night. It was awesome.

JONAH: I'd say we are active participants in our local culture and we have a desire to create things, make things happen, and keep things interesting and satisfying.

MRR: You have a really distinctive sound compared to other bands. How did you develop such a sound?

CANDICE: I can say that for sure when I started this band, although I didn't have an idea of sounding like a particular band, once I starting writing I definitely had influences that combined well with what I was doing and I looked to them. Those bands were Die Kreuzen, No Trend, and Saccharine Trust, and we actually get compared to those bands pretty often. I don't think we sound quite like any of them, and none of them even sound like each other. I guess you can hear the influence, but it's more about that being music that I've connected to and listened to for hours and hours over the years.

JONAH: Yeah, I think we all listen to a varied amount of things, but we are active listeners and influences are bound to crop up. We share things amongst ourselves.

PERRY: I just tried to keep it very Ramones. When I started playing in this band nothing else was really working until I kind of simplified everything.

CANDICE: I think even though there is a weirdness or the other instruments can stray off, keeping the beat really steady was always important to me. It keeps the band punk, rather than veering into like, post-hardcore territory, which could maybe happen in some spots if the drums weren't driving things forward.

PERRY: Yeah, I had to get over a fear of being boring when I play drums but once I got over that fear I realized playing boring drums is a joy.

CANDICE: It's a part of a whole and it makes the other parts good.

MRR: Usually in interviews bands tend to say that what they do is a product of their unconscious. Is this the case with you as well? If not, at the beginning did you want Mystic Inane to sound like someone or rather sound as something? What were these?

NATHAN: I think we kind of answered this.

CANDICE: What about the subconscious part?

JONAH: The subconscious is active in everything that people do.

PERRY: When I first started playing in Mystic Inane, it didn't feel angry to me or have the kind of angst that I was used to playing, but then I realized that it was just about a different kind of angst and finding it and tapping into it. Remember I said it sounded like adult contemporary when I joined?

CANDICE: Oh my god, why did you want to be in it?

PERRY: It was when we were first figuring out how to play the old songs and hadn't quite gotten there yet.

CANDICE: Well, even if I tried, I don't think I could rip off any of the bands I mentioned as influences. I think what we are doing would be a lot less significant if I was able to. Even if I wanted to, I couldn't. So I think it's coming from the subconscious, from the inside rather than the outside. A lot of bands are trying to replicate something and it might sound good in the moment but it's not really something that speaks to me because it's coming so much from the outside of the band and outside of their personalities. It's more like a simulacrum.

JONAH: A studied pose.

MRR: Punk bands used to record albums to promote their tours while rock bands used to tour to promote their albums. Both conceptions see a band as a full-time job. While now bands are hobbies and people record music and stay home. It's more about showing the world your idea about something. What is it that Mystic Inane tells the world?

PERRY: I was thinking about this one. A job and a hobby are like the only two things you can do in this world. You know, that's how people break down our society but I feel like there's a third option. Our band isn't a hobby but it's also not a job.

CANDICE: I agree. I mean, people leave art out of everyday life. Even though it's a thing that people chose to spend time on and put a lot of energy into. Rather than just learning skills, actually expressing yourself. A hobby makes me think of like a craft, a traditional thing, and we are in a continuum of bands for sure. Clayton calls punk folk music because it's so traditional after all these years. I think we're not necessarily in the mold and it means more than a hobby.

JONAH: Punk is not a hobby or a job.

PERRY: It's a jobby.

JONAH: It's an extension of the self, it's how I've defaulted to interact with the world so why wouldn't I be in a punk band?

CANDICE: What are we telling the world?

PERRY: You don't have to have a job or a hobby, you can do whatever you want, dude.

CANDICE: How about consuming other peoples' music? Or reading? It's not a hobby. It's just life.

JONAH: Yeah, it's how I chose to spend my time, which is my life.

CANDICE: Hobbies are bullshit, honestly. It's this capitalist idea of being wholesome.

JONAH: Having recreation time separate from working time.

CANDICE: I think it's relevant in a Marxist context. Like hobbies are afforded to you just in order to keep you sane enough to show up for work the next day.

JONAH: My job is so undemanding that I don't need to blow off steam from it.

CANDICE: I was getting paid $10 an hour to sit in a bookstore because there were no cars to park.

PERRY: I was working on my squat.

CANDICE: What? Oh, I thought you meant you were exercising.

PERRY: No, we were working on the house.

MRR: In this new approach, since bands are more static, it raises the question about whether a band is about an idea or the relationship between musicians nowadays. Which is it in your case?

PERRY: When you're on tour, it's just as much about the relationship between the musicians as it is about the music, like in Some Kind of Monster, the Metallica documentary.

CANDICE: Also, with this band it's a lot about the relationship between the musicians. For me and Nathan, we started playing together because we liked some bands in common. We didn't know each other well. For the rest of us, we shared some favorite bands in common but we started playing together because we were friends and we appreciated what each other do in other areas of our lives. Rather than like, "OK, we want to start a band like this and these are the players." In New Orleans, it's not like that. You can't just handpick like, "OK, this person plays a mean D-beat," or "OK, this person writes heavy riffs." About the road, we definitely get out on the road.

JONAH: I often feel like it's a more genuine representation of how we sound when we play shows out of town because we are performing for strangers. There's no personal stigma about us as people and our audience. Does that make sense?

PERRY: Like there is no context?

CANDICE: People will see us and they've never heard us or heard of us in some cases and after we play I feel like sort of an open wound.

NATHAN: Yeah, like no one moves or people come talk to me and are so surprised that there is a punk band from New Orleans that they like.

We are the future, we are living in the future, and we don't just live in a swamp cut off from the rest of the world.

PERRY: "I like your gear." Whoever said that, fuck you.

CANDICE: Yeah, don't talk to me about my gear. I won't want to talk to you anymore. Or my tone. I don't know what that means.

MRR: I suppose a mystic inane is someone who surrenders sanity to merge itself with a higher power. In your case what are these spiritual apprehension of truths?

NATHAN: I'm not sure Mystic Inane is anything. It's something from a matchbook.

CANDICE: It is something.

JONAH: I guess some people grow up with a religious background that is the lens through which they view the world. For me, that background has been punk and I've assimilated it into how I approach everything that I do, which includes at this point in my life how I try to disregard it and view it skeptically.

PERRY: I thought you were going to talk about Sufism.

CANDICE: Perry, you can talk about Sufism.

PERRY: I don't know as much about Sufism as Jonah does.

JONAH: People who grew up religious often end up rejecting their religion, but it still informs to a degree how they approach things, and I feel I have that relationship with punk.

CANDICE: It did come from a matchbook and it was at the time of the old lineup, but I thought that the two words complemented each other in the way that they contradict each other. For me it wasn't just two words on a matchbook, it was maybe something you could think about and was relevant.

NATHAN: I think it's relevant to the city.

CANDICE: Why, because of the krewe? *[Ed. note: A krewe is a group that organizes parades and floats during Mardi Gras.]*

NATHAN: Aside from the krewe. There are a lot of people who are drawn to New Orleans who are transient, kind of woo types who are into empty spirituality, like parading. I'm thinking of the Day of the Dead parade, mostly.

CANDICE: The rich white Voodoo priestesses of New Orleans.

PERRY: There's this developer here whose wife is an ordained Voodoo priestess.

CANDICE: The first white ordained Voodoo priestess whose husband is responsible for the local Walmart.

PERRY: And this giant building which houses a co-op, police station, and Voodoo store. Cop station mall.

CANDICE: I'd be curious...I've actually met members of the Mystic Krewe of Inane. The old lineup played a game of pool with them after one of our practices. They asked us to play their party.

PERRY: We were in the community print shop printing t-shirts for tour around Mardi Gras I think, and there was a person printing shirts for the Mystic Krewe. It was fucking something about Jurassic Park, but like, a dick thing.

CANDICE: No, it was an ass thing. "Jur-ass-is-a-Park." So there ya go.

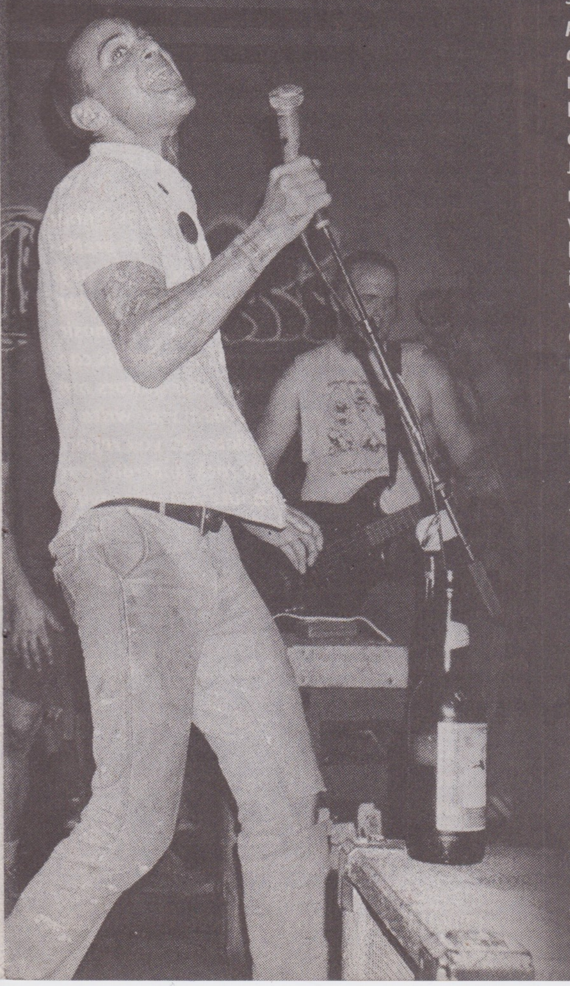
NATHAN: That was Krewe de Vieux.

PERRY: Mystic Inane is a sub-krewe of Krewe de Vieux.

JONAH: I saw a book at the symphony book sale yesterday from the 1920s. It was a mystic krewe book and it had all these really beautiful plates of old men dressed up as butterflies and beetles carrying sickles.

PERRY: I just want to say that the name resonates with me now because I was raised around a bunch of self-absorbed mystical dummies.

JONAH: As was I. Even though I have a different relationship with punk now, it's still the only thing that really resonates with me.



MRR: What is in punk that you want to represent? If not with this band, but with your acts as punks?

NATHAN: I want to represent it all.

JONAH: Punk encapsulates everything for me.

CANDICE: It seems like there're a lot of people in the scene who I share a lot of musical interests with, but our lifestyles are so different and maybe they're in a band, but they are going home to like, a nice apartment and a regular job. I don't know. Punk is just a lot more for the mainstream now.

NATHAN: Punk is a cornucopia.

JONAH: A multifaceted diamond. It means a lot to me, but it's also a pretty meaningless word at this point in history, like there's a lot of things that I wouldn't say aren't punk but they mean less than nothing to me, things that I detest and want nothing to do with but they still get to exist in the punk canon.

NATHAN: I think as a band we draw from a lot of different musical influences and aesthetic influences, and we try to represent that in our music and artwork.

PERRY: We all have ridden freight trains.

NATHAN: Well, I haven't.

PERRY: Ok, Nathan hasn't. But that automatically makes us more punk.

MRR: Your total art (music, record covers, video) is an ode to mistakes, the exciting possibility of failure. These sorts of groups are labeled as mutant music, freak music. This is a tag given generously nowadays, now that more than ten people care about this sub-genre. It has become a tradition even though it was based on opposing traditions. Art is a tradition of performing untraditional ideas but nowadays it seems the only things that are marked as authentic are those done by a few. Do you think that it's true? That authentic ideas are chained to unique creations? Is it fucking tiring that there seems to be a competition about who is weirder, who is the biggest mutant and that your outsider art is suspected to be a public stunt?

PERRY: I'm almost offended. I mean, I'm not offended but I don't see us failing at anything.

CANDICE: Mystake Inane. I think he's hoping we are not that and wanting us to answer why.

PERRY: I think if there's an ode to mistakes and failures, it's like an ode to doing everything collectively. If you do everything collectively, everything just kind of isn't as streamlined as if someone who really knows what they're doing just does it themselves. The total art is like a slapdash...

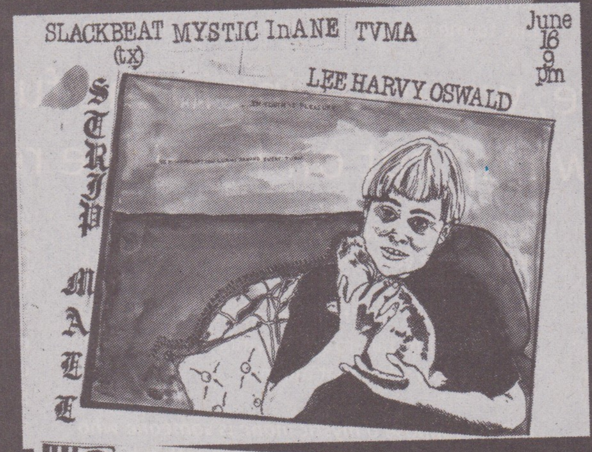
JONAH: A pastiche. There's compromise in it instead of a singular vision.

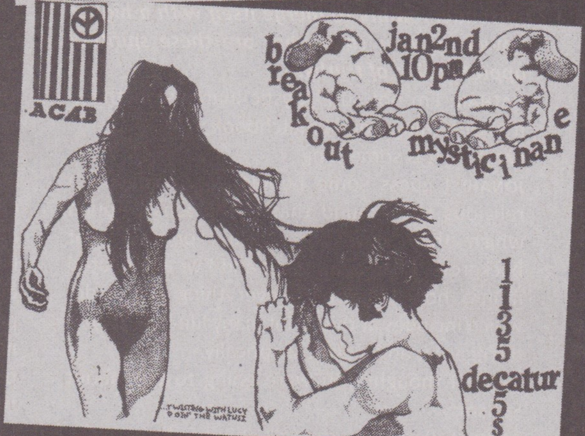
PERRY: I feel like everything in my life is like that.

JONAH: I feel like failure implies that there is a goal in mind, and I don't feel terribly goal-oriented, so I don't know what we could fail at without knowing what we are hoping to achieve.

CANDICE: As far as being called mutant freak music, I don't know. I'm always feeling like a fucking freak. I have mental shit going on but I also think a ton of people do and a lot of people don't identify as outsiders because of it, but I think that those who do are finding some things, very few, but some things that sound like they feel.

JONAH: I have a big problem with the freak punk fad and don't really relate to a lot of it, because a lot of it's just like corny fucking Simpsons references.





PERRY: Name names.

JONAH: You're not a freak because you grew up watching TV.

CANDICE: I wonder if Martin [from Lumpy and the Dumpers] is a cartoon connoisseur...

PERRY: But he's just being Martin. It's the internet that took Martin's shit and then turned...

CANDICE: It's true. I know people get annoyed to hear "I heard that band first" but we were listening to them and nobody cared about them nationally, and then all of a sudden with the internet it's like people take it and blow it up. I mean, they're a great band but then there's like a bunch of squares listening to Lumpy and the Dumpers and paying $100 for a cassette tape.

PERRY: I don't know, if they're listening to Lumpy and the Dumpers and enjoying it, they're probably not that square. Maybe they are.

JONAH: I feel like all this tries to get people to be wackier or more outside of themselves then them actually being themselves. A true freak scene will only exist if there's...

PERRY: A true freak vibe, if you will.

JONAH: People should just not feel obligated to be a weirdo.

PERRY: Yeah, or just not make a collage of cultural references from the '90s.

NATHAN: To be fair, I also think a lot of the reaction to art or music or whatever can sometimes make the original product seem less sincere. You know what I mean? When you just hear the music and you respond to it in a certain way, it's different when you find out about it from Maximum or Vice and it changes your perception of it.

PERRY: But all that stuff melts away when you're actually seeing a band face to face at a show.

CANDICE: It can be. At a show in New Orleans, it's stripped of all that stuff because in most cases internet stuff doesn't come into play in the first place.

MRR: You have a song called Eggs Onna Plate. So I bet your lyrics are pretty nihilistic. Which is fine by me. Especially because with Mystic Inane it's the guitar that is in the spotlight. I believe that music is communication so even instruments can tell ideas. What is it that your guitars are telling to the world? When you write a song about eggs on a plate, do you reflect on food being the new rock and roll or is the true meaning of this song about what it's not about? Are you saying something by not saying it?

NATHAN: The answer is yes.

PERRY: I like that you never do guitar solos but everyone likes your playing.

CANDICE: What's a solo though?

PERRY: You know like, "WEENIGH WEENIGH."

JONAH: It's important to point out that Void wanted to be like Van Halen but failed. I think if you have a goal you should fail at it.

PERRY: Like Bathory too. He considers his best album to be a total failure, but it's the badness that everybody likes.

JONAH: Bolaño writes about failure a lot, and he's found his place and is obsessed with a pantheon of failure.

CANDICE: As far as what you guys are saying, I think the reason I play guitar the way I do has to do with failing at acceptable modes of existence, just failing at growing up and having a career or family, not that it was ever my goal to do so. Instead it's important to me to play and listen to music

that appeals to a very small number of people. Obsessed with failure.

JONAH: That song's not actually about breakfast. It's something I would feel rude to talk about in specifics.

NATHAN: It's about living in squalor.

JONAH: Living the chaos.

NATHAN: With no intention to change your situation.

MRR: What is your approach to playing live? Do you like to play live? Would you have this band if you couldn't leave the rehearsal room?

NATHAN: I like playing live. I definitely like playing out of town, and I like playing in small towns even though sometimes it's shitty. I think it would be a bummer to just have a recording project. I think if it were a bedroom project it would not benefit our sound, because we improve playing things over and over again.

CANDICE: I think recording is important to me because so much of what I do is listening to recorded music, so I want to have things documented. Playing live locally and otherwise is something we value and we are open to playing a lot of different kinds of shows.

JONAH: Playing live is necessary for me. The anxiety and fear that I get before I perform is a good engine for me.

MRR: You have a song called "I Believe in UFOs." You believe in alien life or in the existence of alien vehicles. Most of the times people reflect their own disgust in humanity on UFOs in a form of fear. The whole concept of alien invasion is based on the life on earth where the dominant mammals, humans, are destroying other lives not only for their own survival but just because. Maybe on other planets beings think differently. After all, life on earth is fucking boring and if I think about it only Bowie's "Life on Mars" is a perfect song about all this universal living, since it's about the fact that humanity is so fucked, he would rather live on Mars. Do you believe in UFOs?

JONAH: The song is not about UFOs.

CANDICE: It's a Screeching Weasel cover.

JONAH: You could replace UFOs with Jesus or communism. The song is about wanting to surrender faith to something outside yourself, to a larger goal, but knowing in your heart that there isn't anything you can ascribe faith to. I would love to have a consuming belief in the existence of extraterrestrials, but I know it's empty in that it holds no possibility for salvation.

PERRY: I think it's almost a more amazing thought that in the universe where there are millions of galaxies and the whole universe is so vast and endless that we are maybe the only life form in the whole thing.

JONAH: Even if we're in the presence of alien life forms, we would not be aware. Our idea of life on other planets is so attached to the idea that it would be a being with a body and arms and legs.

MRR: The X-Files was a huge advocate of alien existence. But their idea was similar to Christians' belief in god. The X-Files said if you believe in UFOs you believe in good—in this allegory it's against the evil forces of the government who symbolized Satan. But after all, we were cheering for two FBI agents for a whole decade. And now we have this new thing with people being addicted to TV shows which project cops as our heroes. Have the cops won?

PERRY: I don't think the cops are winning right now. There's a pretty active battle with the cops going on in the country right now.

CANDICE: I don't know, I think the cops are winning.

PERRY: Well, they haven't won.

NATHAN: They haven't won our hearts.

CANDICE: This current movement against police brutality is the most important thing I've seen in my lifetime. It's not coming from college students who have read Howard Zinn or whatever, it's coming from the street and it's something I've never seen before. It's so much more significant than the Occupy movement. I can't even say Occupy was significant, whereas this current movement is immensely significant. So maybe the cops are winning, but this is the way to begin to take it back.

PERRY: I was living in New York City during Occupy. It was the best time of my life.

MRR: What did you want to achieve with this band? Have you succeeded? What is the future for the Mystic Inane?

JONAH: No success.

PERRY: No goals. No future.

CANDICE: It's not an end. It's just playing music with people that I like. I'm always feeling like I don't know if we will keep being able to create music that I'm happy with, but that's part of being in a band and having standards for expression. It's scary, and I think that's what I want, not for it to be easy.

PERRY: I think as long as we are writing songs to write songs, that we are not writing to write Mystic Inane songs, we are succeeding in what we are trying to do.

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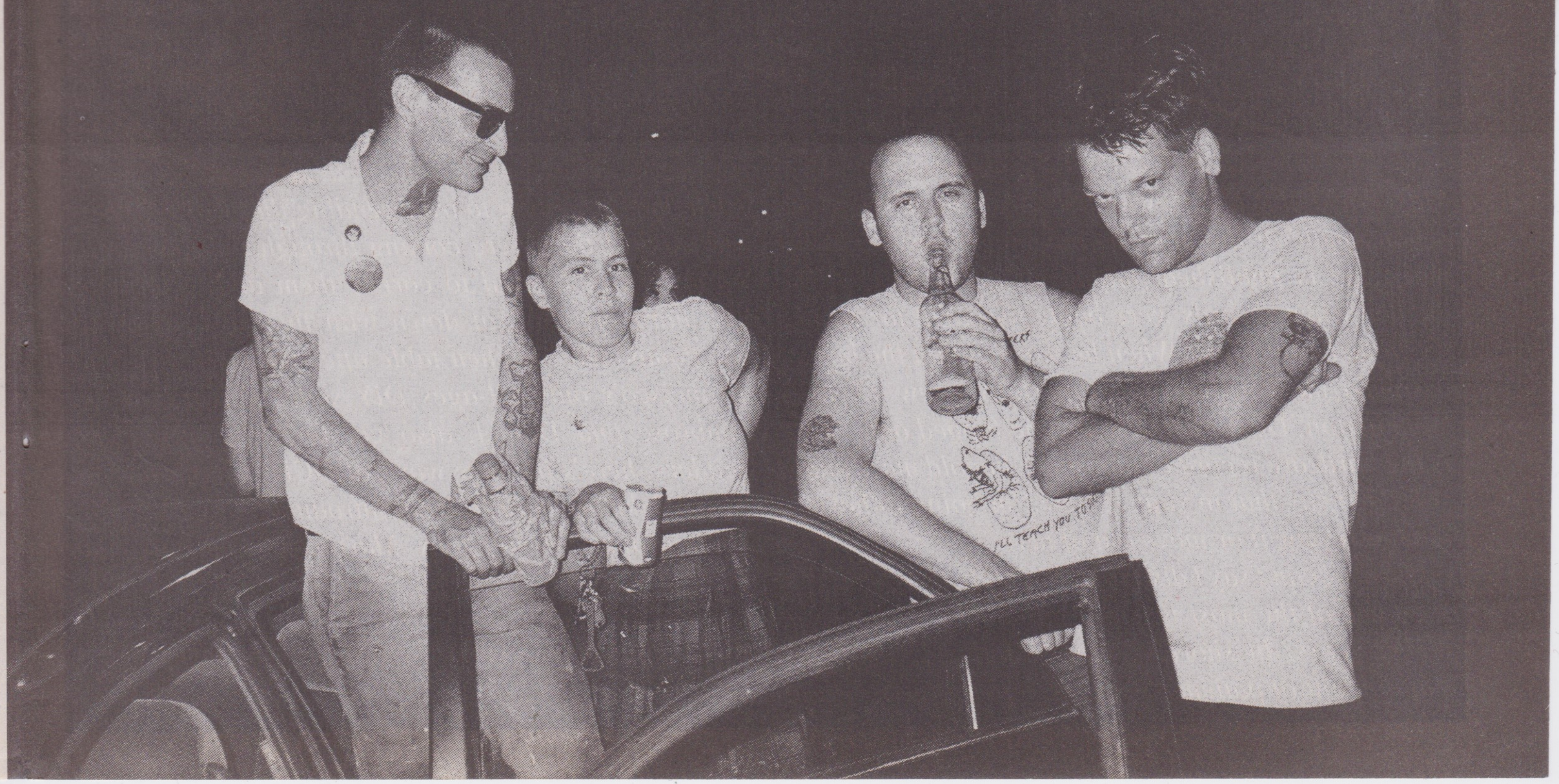
mysticinane.bandcamp.com

Friday, August 14: Los Angeles
Saturday August 15: San Pedro
Sunday August 16: Fresno @ the Infoshop
Monday August 17: San Jose @ San Jose Rock Shop
Tuesday August 18: Oakland @ the Church
Wednesday August 19: San Francisco @ Honey Hive Gallery



Pure Disgust

Max Wickham, a reviewer here who happens to be a housemate at the gated compound from which this magazine is published, happened to be here in the kitchen when records were being assigned for review a couple months ago. When he learned that the bosses assigned me Chained*, the superlative new 7" from Washington, DC's Pure Disgust, he flipped out. "That is the hardcore record of the year," he told me, "and if you don't say that in your review I'm going to have to double-review it or move out of here."*

I mean, I can't say I disagree. Lyrically and sonically, it's some of the most inspired hardcore I've heard in recent years. In short, it's the soundtrack to finally running out of patience with the state of the world as such and the setting to transcending that world. When we learned they were coming through the Bay Area, naturally we wanted to corner them and talk about DC hardcore. We sat down with the whole band at the compound's kitchen table after their show at San Francisco's only all-ages DIY space (their roadies, Ambrose and Daniel, also got to hang out). Dear readers, here's the new wave of DCHC. Interview by Max Wickham and Eli Wald. Introduction by Eli Wald. Photographs provided by Martin Sorrondeguy and Farrah Skeiky.

Rob, vocals | DP, bass | Brendan & Ace, guitars | Robin, drums

MRR: I hear a lot of different influences in your records, from a more meat and potatoes take on American hardcore, like Negative Approach or Iron Cross, to more melodic UK fare. How did you use all these influences to create your music? Or was it more organic than that? Were there specific influences when you started the band or did you just kind of go for it?

Robin: For the demo, I wrote most of it, and DP wrote one song. At the time, I had just seen that 86 Mentality reunion and was like, man I want to do a really to the point Oi!-tinged hardcore band that's just really brutal, but really catchy. I kind of aimed for that when I wrote the demo. But the thing about trying to write an 86-style song is that you are just going to end up writing an 86 song, because it's so simple and to the point. So I think it came out a bit more mid-paced, Boston hardcore influenced, like the slow Negative FX songs and stuff. The kind of bouncy beat. For the next 7" I think it was a little more DC hardcore influenced, like Iron Cross.

DP: For the new 7"...to be honest, I was kind of trying to recreate the UK82 stuff, like GBH, Partisans and stuff. To my idea, I thought I was like bringing it back, something that bands right now weren't doing. But then I realized that was something that was actually pretty popular.

Rob: He doesn't really listen to new music, so....

DP: I was actually just kind of out of touch. We played New York's Alright, and I saw every band was like... *[plays 1-2 beat on desk] [laughter]* So I guess it really wasn't that original after all.

MRR: Thirty-five years on in hardcore, I ask the influence question, but how much of hardcore is really reinventing the wheel and how much of it is just kind of throwback or appreciation? When you guys do another record are you going to try to develop the sound you created? Or are you going to try to venture in a new direction?

DP: Well to be honest, we have one new song for the LP, and I think it sounds fairly different from the other things we've done. I can't really describe anything it sounds like. It's more like its own thing now.

Brendan: It's faster, for sure.

Robin: With the new 7", I feel like the riffs are pretty simplistic UK82 kind of style. But with the new song, it has a similar kind of beat, mid-paced fast beat, but the riffs have way more notes, still catchy.

MRR: So a little bit busier. This goes back to what you were saying about seeing the 86 Mentality reunion. How did more contemporary bands in and around DC shape the way you guys sounded as a band? I did hear a lot of 86 Mentality in your sound, and I guess asking if that's a coincidence is kind of...

Robin: For a while we tried to steer away from saying that, since 86 was *very* trendy for a second. But 86 Mentality was one of the first modern-ish DC hardcore bands I heard. Ambrose over there made me buy a 7" when I was fifteen or sixteen. Along with Aftermath, Striking Distance, No Justice—I just love how hard that music is, but still kind of not necessarily stupid. Some of the lyrics are really cool, the messages they throw out.

MRR: 86 Mentality was arguably the biggest band of that era in DC. You guys are in a fairly large group of bands in your area, with a wide range of musical backgrounds. Can you let us know what else you do musically? How does Pure Disgust work in relation to your other projects? You're doing everything from crossover to DC hardcore in other bands.

Ace: My friend Brendan and I started this band called Jävla, which is a D-beat Band. I always wanted to bring a bunch of different styles of punk that I really like into the DC scene. We started Video Pricks which has its first show coming up, it sounds like Deep Wound weirdo shit, like NASA Space Universe, all over the place. And I'm glad there's a death metal band now, because I really love death metal. We've got a pop punk band starting, just a bunch of like, new shit going on. I just wanna make DC all over the place, make everything really solid. Should we do a list?

MRR: Yeah, we can do a list. Just bands you're in?

Rob: I'm only in three. Pure Disgust, ICE, and a band called Varick. That's it.

Ace: I also play in Red Death, Standoff, Jävla, with Rob in ICE—we played a couple shows in the store—and this newer-newer band that just recorded a demo called Defenestrados. That's it for me right now.

Brendan: I'll just do bands that have recordings. I have this band that's like my Protester, a one-man thing called Spite. I'm in Jävla, I'm in Protester. What else has recorded... Lackluster, but that hasn't put anything out yet.

DP: And for me, I'm just in Pure Disgust and Standoff.

Robin: I'm also in Protester, Red Death, Hard Stripes, ICE, Jävla, Standoff, Collusion, Spite, Varick, and Acid Drop.

MRR: How do you feel that Pure Disgust as a band relates to the way these other bands happen? Is there something different about Pure Disgust than these other bands? When I was a kid, my friends and I would form bands out of boredom, and sometimes bands would stick, sometimes they would just fade away. How does Pure Disgust fit?

Robin: I think for me, I agree to play in more bands than I can handle. When I was releasing way more demos than I am now, I didn't know which ones would stick with people hearing them. At the time, when we recorded the demo, I didn't know if people would give a shit, because I wrote most of the songs and DP wrote one of the songs and we just kind of recorded the demo with our drummer at the time, Connor, who learned most of the songs day of. The day we were recording I taught them to him. And we had an intro, but I realized it ripped off Wasted Time too much, so I wrote a new one that day. That was the demo, and it just really stuck with people.

When I release a demo and see that people are really into it, then I'm like this band needs to get out there, push it while you can. Especially in hardcore, it can be the hot thing that people really like one second and then people don't really give a shit about it the next day or whatever. With Pure Disgust, the longest tour we'd done before this was like five days. We were always planning on doing a full US tour, but I think especially with the new 7", it's doing better than I expected. The matter of how I push bands is really dependent on what people like.

MRR: Feedback is important.

DP: When we released the demo we didn't really expect it to take off like it did. We started a band just for the sake of having fun. I guess it ended up sticking with people. So it was kind of a surprise when it turned out to do as well as it did. For example, the song I wrote on the demo, "America," I wrote it one day while waiting to catch the bus.

Robin: I try to tour with all my bands and put them all out there, because I love all the bands that I'm doing, but it's definitely a lot easier when there's like—I'm sure you've experienced this too—when a demo pops off or a 7" pops off. When everybody's into it it's way easier to book a tour and push it. You have to play it by ear, really.

MRR: This goes back to the family tree: I'm looking at this paper and I've written all of your bands on it. Some connect and some don't. I knew you all were in lots of bands especially with similar people. That's how I did it growing up and that's how I still do it. I form bands with people I like and that I'm comfortable with and we explore new areas of punk. Do you think the scene in DC is stronger because most of the bands have similar members with similar taste and similar ideas of what music should be? Or is there a broader scene that you guys connect with as well or enjoy playing out with?

Ace: I think it's really strong because the people that are involved, our little friend group, care a lot about what's going on, hence the family tree, us all being in each other's bands, all being very active in booking shows and whatnot. At the same time, all of us are very open and inviting to new people who are coming in into the scene, down to book whichever person has a new band, down to talk to some kid wearing an 86 shirt who nobody's seen before. I think that both of those aspects together are really making the scene grow stronger. It's definitely pushing forward and hopefully will expand even further and new kids you don't even know will start new bands.

MRR: QCHC, an English label, put out the new record along with Katorga, and Red Death toured with the Flex. I also noticed similar banners with "NWOBHC" and "NWODCHC" have been going up. How do these two scenes inform each other?

Rob: There is a DC-UK connect and DC-Boston connect. DC-UK is a thing because all of our bands started around the same time and we all knew each other, and we all grew together. In a sense, the bands grew up together. We're all friends. I love those guys, everyone over there. Ola agreed to put it out because Robin was talking to her. We're all friends and that makes things stronger.

Ace: The big connect with the UK scene was around the first Damaged City, that's when all the UK bands started coming down. I moved up to DC and was living there when the second one happened. All the UK bands were staying at my house, and Red Death, we all lived at the house at the time. We all befriended each other from hanging out for a couple days. Everyone got to meet everyone else via that fest as well. That definitely created that strong unity that we have today.

MRR: This kind of goes back too to 86 Mentality, growing up in your area, I'm just assuming that you most of you grew up around DC, Maryland, having bands like Coke Bust, Time to Escape, 86 Mentality, all these other bands that were made up of people similar to you guys, people that form bands, that form a lot of bands with the same people...DC has historically had a very rich punk and hardcore scene. It's always pushed the envelope but always come back to very fierce and hard music. Is there kind of a sense that the torch has been passed, or do you see yourselves as peers to those bands? Do you see yourselves as true peers, or do you see yourself as taking on what they were doing five or ten years ago?

Robin: It's kind of a weird mixture of both in a way. We're younger than them, so we don't have as many obligations as they would, a lot of them are going into real jobs—Chris Moore just started his own dog walking business. Life catches up with you eventually. Just because we're younger, we can be in so many bands and push them a lot more, same thing they were doing probably when they were our age. I still respect Coke Bust a lot. They were the first DC band that I saw. I would go to punk shows at bigger clubs, and Chris Moore would hand me a flyer. Then I went and saw Coke Bust and was like, "I don't understand what's going on, it's too fast." You know, I grew to love them.

It was just the case where I would love going to Chris's shows or Nick's shows, and like have a great time, but then during the summer or another time, one of their bands would go on a full US or Euro tour, and like "nobody's booking shows"—that motivated me certainly and everybody else who grew up in DC to try and get off our asses, book shows for ourselves, so people we like would come out and sing along too. I certainly get a lot of advice from Chris, so it's kind of a mixture of both. They're my peers so I talk to them, and we respect each other's bands and try to help each other out. At the same time we can do a lot more, because life hasn't caught up to us quite yet.

DP: I feel like me and Brendan, our first time going to a show Coke Bust played as well. I don't know if that's the case for anybody else.

MRR: Is that the case? I wanted to ask what your first shows were. Is it pretty much Coke Bust?

DP: It was Coke Bust, Cost, some incredibly bizarre noise/screamo band, and an emo band at this place in northern Virginia called Little Man's Garage. It was the first time I've ever seen the full frontal nudity of a man in a crowd at a show. It was also the first time I'd ever seen Coke Bust and they blew me away.

Brendan: I was at that show, that was my first show as well.

MRR: How old were you?

Brendan: I was maybe twelve? I'm eighteen. We sat outside talking about Sunny Day Real Estate the whole time.

MRR: Hey, Sunny Day Real Estate is kind of tight.

Brendan: At the time, to be honest, I wasn't really into hardcore. He kind of dragged me there. After that I got into screamo, so it's fine.

MRR: We all take different paths.

Ace: For me, I didn't actually grow up in the DC area. I grew up in Raleigh, North Carolina, a suburb outside of it, for like nineteen years. Then I moved to DC like two years ago. My first show, I was sixteen, it was a house show. This weird blues rock band called Shithorse was playing, but a powerviolence band called Backslider from Philly were playing too. I don't remember who else played right now. It was pretty cool, I remember moshing for the first time, and my friend was scared that I was gonna get hurt and pulled me out.

Brendan: The first time I moshed was to a band called Foozle. *[laughter]* This emo-pop band, I remember Daniel standing to the side and I was like "C'mon, why don't we go mosh!"

Rob: My first show...I'm actually a very late bloomer. My first show, I was eighteen, in 2011, in Baltimore. It was a Stout show. My first DC show was in 2012. Coke Bust, Sick Fix, Mindset, some DC band. I met Ambrose at that show, he invited me to other shows…

MRR: Would you say Ambrose is kind of your manager-slash-spiritual guide?

All: Yeah, kind of.

Robin: I guess technically my first show was 2008 at St. Stephen's Church. It was Leftöver Crack, and in retrospect, it was really funny that Chris Moore booked Leftöver Crack.

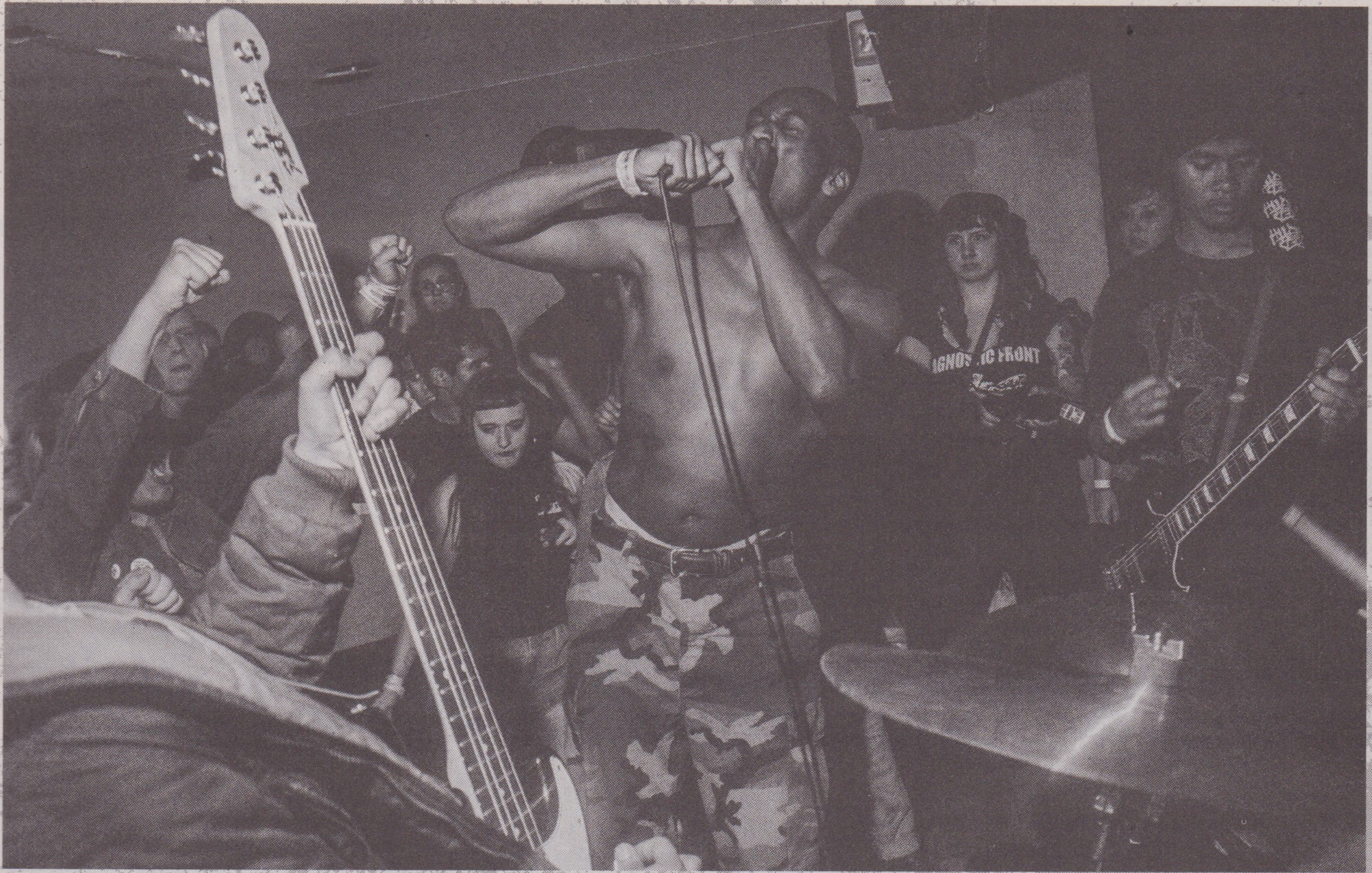
MRR: Stza gets around.

Robin: Leftöver Crack, Bomb the Music Industry, Max Levine Ensemble, maybe Magrudergrind actually. That was the first one, but it didn't really hit me then. I still went to shows at bigger clubs whenever a punk band would come by or whatever. But then I really started to go to shows in 2010, 2011, when Paint it Black did St. Stephen's, I think with Coke Bust. The week after Dropdead played with Magrudergrind and I was like, I just need to do this with my weekends.

MRR: What drew you to hardcore? For a lot of people, hardcore is about the community, it's about being disaffected and separate from the larger culture. So how much of your introduction to hardcore was about the aesthetic, the way it looked and felt and was tactile, and how much of it was the music side of it?

DP: For me, just everything about punk, I guess I found it cool. Did you guys ever have Comcast? Where you can press one and you can look at the movies and music videos and stuff? Bad Brains playing "Big Takeover" in New York, that was on there. I watched that and I was like what's this? I thought that was really weird. But then eventually I got into them. Everything about it, I was really into the music, the aesthetics, the lyrics, I was drawn to pretty much all of it.

MRR: That's actually a really good segue, bringing up the Bad Brains, because I wanted to talk about DC. As a city, and how that's affected the way you guys make music and play music. DC is a historically gritty city. There're many things you can draw from that: it's the nation's capital, and in a lot of ways it exudes a certain sense of grandeur. That's where senators live, that's where the wealth of this nation is, just in lobbying and stuff like that. But it's also divided by a lot of the issues that the rest of this country is facing. How do these issues influence the message of the band? We're talking about the difference between the music and the message. You guys have made it clear that there are all these influences that you like, how do these influences impact and kind of grow the message of the band? And specifically, in that kind of paradigm, how does DC work into that message and into your experiences coming up in DC and creating the message of Pure Disgust?



Rob: I feel like me being around DC doesn't really guide my lyrics or message toward Pure Disgust. It's just how my life has been. Pure Disgust could have been way different if I decided to write bullshit lyrics. I could totally have just dropped a demo and broken it up afterwards. But I write about what I live. In a way I guess DC has shaped that, but I write about being Black, so that could happen anywhere. DC hasn't really shaped that, but being in DC has given me that opportunity to voice how I'm feeling. In that sense it's been great. But DC hasn't really shaped it.

MRR: Has playing and finding music or hardcore in particular through your friends impacted your development?

Rob: Being into punk has shaped how I view life differently. I would have been "alt" or whatever if I was growing up and my dad had just shown me Papa Roach and shit. But he also introduced me to Afrobeat and shit like that. Me going into punk so late has just shaped my life for the better. Without punk I'd be boring as fuck you know? I'd be normal as fuck. Punk makes me look at other music differently as well. I can take pleasure out of certain things, like there's a certain drum beat in this Afrobeat band that I can analyze and talk to Ambrose over there about it because I don't like strictly punk. I like tons of other things. But I wouldn't be able to appreciate those other things without punk. I don't know, it's difficult to explain really.

MRR: No, that makes a lot of sense. I wouldn't have any kind of framework for playing music, if it weren't for writing and playing in punk bands.

DP: To grab on to what Rob said: if it weren't for punk, I wouldn't be the same person I am now. In a way punk shaped me as a person. I'm not trying to be like "I'm so different" or anything. But I'm still in high school. I'm sixteen. I just finished my junior year in high school. When I look around in my school and stuff, not to say there's not cool people in my school, I get along fine with people, but I always feel like I have a different mentality than everybody else. In a way I'm more advanced in the way I think than a lot of my peers at school. Like I said, not to say that they're not cool or anything, but I'm just saying in a way it matured the way I think.

MRR: Yeah, your worldview.

Robin: Yeah. I mean in a very literal sense, if it weren't for punk I wouldn't have seen what I've seen. Obviously, touring alone, going all over the country and eventually the world you know? Also to bring it back to DC, growing up, I mostly stayed in Bethesda and places in DC very close to it. I love my parents, I love them to death. Without them, we wouldn't have a practice space, a place to put up bands, a van, a place where someone could sleep for seven days, where all these guys could stay whenever. Our family's thanked on every DC hardcore record coming up. They're the best. I had a great upbringing.

But as a parent I could understand not wanting to take your kid into the city. Especially since they came in in the '80s, when everything was fucked. Nice places like U Street and 14th Street, then you walked down there alone and could get shot. I understand how they didn't want to put me there. But with punk, I just went to shows in the city; I met people of all different backgrounds. If I wanted to hang out, I'd go to a different place in the city I'd never been to before. Without that, I'd have a very sheltered view of the city I thought I knew, you know? If it wasn't for punk I'd have a very skewed view on the city that I lived in. I'd think everybody lived in a really big house and everybody's parents worked for the government, that everybody was having a great time living in the city, when there's a lot more to it. There's a lot more character to it, in every block. To this day I think I'm still discovering the city, which is one of the reasons I love it and want to stick around for a while.

Brendan: I mean, I've just learned a lot through being in a very youth-centered culture where everything is brought up to the forefront. Without punk, I'd still be wearing Merrells, I'd be wearing Crocs. I don't know.

MRR: This ties in really well to my last question. It's a question I was asked the first time I was ever interviewed at *MRR* by somebody who was older than me, by about

ten years. I don't think the band I was in ever really answered this question, but it was something I thought about a lot. In what ways do you work for punk? And in what ways does punk work for you?

Rob: The way I work for punk is I can get other people of color out to shows. Even tonight, some guy was like, "Yo, you didn't play "Blind to Race." I wanted you to play "Blind to Race," that's my song right there!" He repeated lyrics to me. And I was like, "I know the lyrics." *[laughter]* In that sense, I can get other individuals out to shows, or even to start their own bands. Going back to that, I view other music through a certain perspective because of punk. It helps me analyze everything differently. People, jobs even. Punk works for me in a non-punk way, where I can evaluate life as is.

Ace: The way that I work for punk definitely strengthened my work ethic from when I started going to shows. I was still in high school, and then when I started going it put me in all these social situations I had never been in, with all these older people. Being introduced to people significantly older than me, it didn't have that high school mentality or anything. Being out in the real world in a sense, outside of that high school bubble. It makes you kind of want to work on doing cool things like booking shows, starting bands, organizing tours and records, stuff like that. It's shaped everything for me. I wouldn't be living in DC if it wasn't for punk. I'm going back to college now, but I would have been in my senior year of college if it wasn't for punk. It's basically shaped everything up until now for me.

DP: The way I work for punk: I play in a band like Pure Disgust, like what Rob said, a band that in a way has an appeal to an audience that faces discrimination, and in a way having a voice for a group of people that are going through a tough time, a marginalized group. The way punk has worked for me, it's allowed me to do something like this, go on a thirty-six day tour, to view the United States, to do stuff a lot of sixteen year-olds would not be able to do. Not only that, but I'd like to specifically add, it has shaped me as a person. In a way it ended up being the thing that introduced me to what I want to do in life. It made me develop an interest in politics, which is something I want to study, and essentially what I want to do with my life. If it weren't for that, I wouldn't want to do this. Listening to bands like Crass, Conflict and all those anarcho-punk bands, the Dicks, the politics in their lyrics has always really appealed to me. It made me develop an interest and helped me figure out what I wanted to do with my life outside of punk.

Brendan: For me it's much more simple. I've always wanted to do music, in different ways. I've always wanted to either be a huge rock star or, just like...I've always wanted to play music, punk just brought me a way to actually do that. That's how it works for me. It also brings together a bunch of different people from different backgrounds, I get to see all these different people, I get to understand that it's not just people in cookie cutter houses where everything's great.

I'm not sure how I work for punk. I'm young and I'm punk and I hope someone can see that these kids are doing bands and want to do them too. Because I think punk is a youth movement, always has been and always will be.

Robin: Yeah. What I try to do for punk is definitely try to make it as welcoming and open to kids—because as a young kid, I feel like way more kids can get into Minor Threat than actually do, you know? Because I feel like when you're a young thirteen or fourteen-year-old you're just naturally just pent-up with anger or something, for one reason or another. Like, your parents aren't nice to you, your friends are changing or something. They could really get into it. I'll always play all-ages shows, always talk to younger kids and get them into bands. I'm young and I try to start as many bands with people my age and go around the country and show that this should be the norm. When I heard Minor Threat and was like, "Whoa, this is really cool" and then I looked at Wikipedia and I'm like, "Whoa, they're eighteen?!" That just changed my world, that these kids could go and create this whole movement and scene, in such a healthy way also. They're all nice to each other, the whole clean living thing in straightedge, I

think it's such a healthy outlook that doesn't get its due. I love that there is a danger aspect, that's also appealing, but I try to keep it all-ages and make it a youth thing. Whether I succeed or not, we'll see.

What punk does for me, I don't know. Besides what's been said, it makes me not boring. I have such an intense fear of becoming just a normal guy one day. Punk kind of saves me from that, gives me perspective on people in all walks of life. Like when I was three could I imagine a place like *MRR*? You know people live rent-free and do this magazine? No! It just kind of makes me hopeful for what I could become.

MRR: That's awesome.

Rob: That's also why we only play all-ages spots. Like he said, punk has always been a youth thing. And when people get sort of mad at us for only wanting to play an all-ages spot, their reasoning is always "Well, we don't have young kids." Why do you think that if you don't have—

Ace: If you don't have spaces where kids can go.

Rob: Exactly. That's why you don't have young kids, you know? I don't know, we always want to be accessible to these young kids. DP's fucking sixteen.

Ace: Like what Brendan said, just the fact that knowing that some kid might go to one of our shows and see us playing, people liking our band in a way inspiring them to go out and do the same thing we're doing. But you know, it's a really good feeling.

Rob: We've dropped shows—good shows—that weren't all-ages. And it's solely because we don't agree with that mindset. Like, he wouldn't be able to go to an eighteen-plus show or a twenty-one-plus show. At the time, I was young and wanted a band where I could go to other shows, and it wouldn't be fair if we played. If we played they couldn't go in if they weren't playing. It's not fair, it's just not cool.

Brendan: We experienced that on Jävla tour. We played at a bar we played at before with Pure Disgust, and we were able to do it, but I guess someone else was doing it that time. We were playing, and came up to me and asked for my ID. They found out we were underage and were like why are you here? We were supposed to headline, but we ended up playing a short set before everyone else and we had to leave right away. Even that was sort of heartbreaking. Bands were really cool that we were playing with, but no one was there. How could anyone be there? How are you going to be thirty years old and watching a seventeen-year-old play D-beat? It's not going to be as appealing as someone my age watching it, someone younger.

MRR: Any last thoughts or shout outs? Anything you want to say?

DP: Shout out to my mom for giving me the opportunity to do this. Maybe if it was another sixteen-year-old's parents, it would be like fuck no, you know? You're going to California with these people they barely know. To be honest, the person my mom knows the best is Robin. She doesn't really know the rest of them.

MRR: Well, you know what, we can send her a copy of this magazine.

DP: I wanted to give another shout out to Mark Schubert, since he was the first person to ever talk to me at a show.

Brendan: Shout out to Nick Hinsch and Daniel, because without them there wouldn't be a New Wave right when it started.

Ace: This guy was in a powerviolence band when he was in twelve.

Brendan: Shout out to Daniel for taking me to that first Coke Bust show.

Ace: Shout out to the New Wave of DC Hardcore, all the young kids that come out to shows, everyone that's booked a show. Shout out to Bust Off. Special shout out to 1326 Newton Street, that's the place I moved into when I moved to DC, and it was an important central hub for a lot of stuff going on in hardcore right now, like Moshers Delight being based in there. Nick Tape from Coke Bust living there. Them inviting me to live in there definitely shapes what my life is now.

Rob: Shout out to my parents, Boston, UK, all my friends there, New Wave of DC Hardcore. Shout out to Turnstile, best band of all time. Everyone I've met on this tour is sick and all of our shows have been *badass*. I'm very surprised my voice hasn't died, there was a time I was sick or something, it was terrible. But everything's really sick. Shout out to Robin for booking this entire tour. I'm very grateful for where I am. Shout out to punk. I wouldn't be here if it weren't for that. Turnstile is the best band of all time, I'll stick by that.

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OUT NEXT: Afternoon Gentleman 7", Six Brew Bantha new LP

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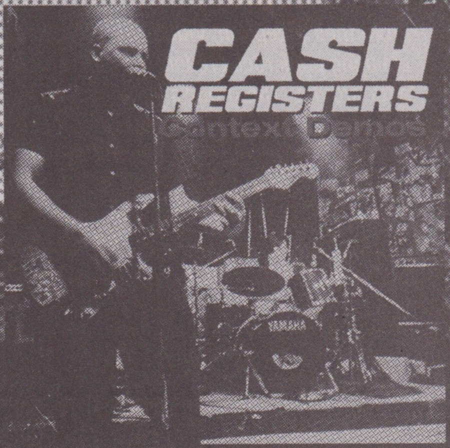

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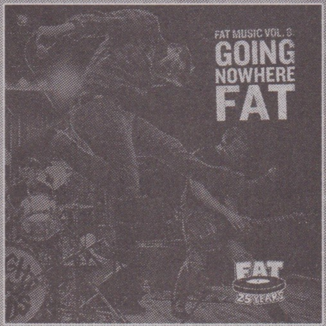

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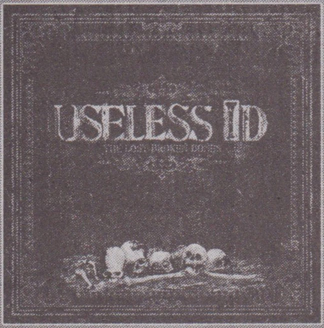

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VIDEO

From their inception, Video has stood head and shoulders above the glut of bands claiming punk rock credentials as one of the most confident, talented, and focused acts around. The group's flawless first LP, Leather Leather, along with a handful of similarly excellent 7"s, easily grabbed the attention of anyone smart enough to check it out, and their electric live shows have done nothing but cement their reputation as a truly top-tier band. As Video gears up for the release of their second album, fall's The Entertainers, frontman TV's Daniel graciously shared some insight into the band's inner workings, with assistance from bassist Harpal Assi. Interview by Miranda Fisher. Photos by Steven Ruud and Jon Chamberlain.

MRR: YOU GUYS HAVE A NEW RECORD COMING OUT SOON?
Daniel: Yeah, October 30th.

MRR: WHAT'S IT CALLED?
Daniel: *The Entertainers.*

MRR: WHY IS IT CALLED *The Entertainers*?
Daniel: 'Cause it's basically my entire life boiled down into one record. I was born an entertainer; we're going to do this forever, and then die as entertainers.

MRR: WHY WEREN'T YOUR PREVIOUS RECORDS CALLED *The Entertainers* THEN?
Daniel: 'Cause they were called other things.

MRR: WHAT'S THE HARDEST THING ABOUT BEING IN VIDEO?
Daniel: The hardest thing about being in Video is just being far superior to all other bands. Basically, we're the best band in the world, so we can't go see other good bands.

MRR: DO YOU FEEL A LOT OF PRESSURE TO LIVE UP TO THAT?
Daniel: There's no pressure involved. It's too easy.

MRR: DO YOU THINK THAT YOU'RE FAR SUPERIOR TO THE OTHER BANDS THAT YOU'RE IN?
Daniel: *[laughs]* Probably.

MRR: WHY?
Daniel: It's due to the fact that we have the right personnel in this outfit.

MRR: WHAT'S THE IDEAL AUDIENCE FOR VIDEO?
Daniel: The ideal audience is a bunch of rich people who have good taste in things, but that's typically not the fans who come to see us.

MRR: HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE FANS WHO TYPICALLY GO SEE YOU?
Daniel: Jesus Christ. *[exhales]* It's mainly a bunch of drunk imbeciles who think they're sooooo cute. Mainly a bunch of people who think that they know everything about me, my life, our lives, our music, and that they know everything about punk in general. They want to claim their superiority to us and want to talk about records and things like that. But I don't really care. We really don't care about the opinions of people who come to see us.

MRR: DO YOU CARE ABOUT ANYONE'S OPINIONS?
Daniel: I care about mine.

MRR: SO YOU SAID THEY THINK THEY KNOW ABOUT PUNK. WHAT DO YOU THINK THEY DON'T KNOW ABOUT PUNK?
Daniel: They should know that Video is the be-all end-all. Period.

MRR: THAT'S ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PUNK?
Daniel: That's all you need to know. Payton Green, Gregory Rutherford, Harpal Assi, TV's Daniel. That's all you need to know.
Harpal: Damn straight.

MRR: WHAT WOULD YOU DESCRIBE AS VIDEO'S VISUAL AESTHETIC?
Daniel: Our visual aesthetic? Beauty. Have you ever seen us?

MRR: SURE.
Daniel: Yeah, of course. The sharpest-dressed dudes. The most beautiful men in the world.

MRR: SO IF HARPAL STARTED SUDDENLY DRESSING BADLY, WOULD YOU KICK HIM OUT OF THE BAND?
Daniel: We have band meetings.

MRR: WHERE YOU TALK ABOUT DRESS CODE?
Daniel: We have strategies. We're not some rinky-dink band that tries to say, "We're going to go out and play, and we're going to practice." No. We're highly organized.

MRR: SO WHAT'S THE PROTOCOL?
Daniel: Protocol—as far as the band is concerned?

MRR: WHAT KIND OF RULES DO YOU HAVE? GUIDELINES.
Daniel: Just be the best that we can be. That's all it is. We're all on the same page, for the most part. We don't have to have long discussions about everything. We can say, "Hey, we're doing this." We can nod and take a look. It's on.

MRR: YOU JUST UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER?
Daniel: Of course.

MRR: WHO DO YOU THINK IS THE MOST REPLACEABLE MEMBER OF VIDEO?
Daniel: We're all integral to the outfit that is Video.

MRR: SO IF ONE OF YOU DIED, VIDEO WOULD STOP EXISTING?
Daniel: Well, we're all gonna die.

MRR: THEN VIDEO WILL STOP EXISTING?
Daniel: No, we'll live forever.

MRR: WHAT'S THE BEST PLACE YOU'VE EVER PLAYED?
Harpal: On a boat in Stockholm.

MRR: DID YOU GET FLOWN OUT TO PLAY THAT?
Daniel: Yes.

MRR: YOU GUYS ARE ALWAYS GETTING FLOWN OUT TO PLAY FESTIVALS?
Daniel: No. Not as much as we'd like.
Harpal: Once, I think. Twice. Total Punk.
Daniel: We don't get flown out as much as we like. First class is what we prefer.

MRR: WHAT'S THE IDEAL VIDEO TOUR RIDER?
Daniel: Party sub. First and foremost.
Harpal: Iced latte.
Daniel: Other than that, mainly a lot of room for us to hang out in, where we don't have to talk to other people. We'd rather not have to interact with the other bands, or the fans who come to see us.

MRR: SO WHY DO YOU DO THESE PEOPLE THE FAVOR OF PLAYING FOR THEM?
Daniel: *[exhales]* That's a good question. We can't give up on the world, unfortunately. As much as we look negatively toward most things that are around, we have a duty. With great power comes great responsibility. We have a talent. So we have to show it to the world. And whether you pay attention or not...That's what we're here for.

MRR: SO, WHEN YOU STARTED VIDEO, WERE THERE OTHER BANDS YOU WANTED TO SOUND LIKE THAT YOU TOOK AS INFLUENCES AT ALL?
Daniel: Yeah. Pretty much our entire lives we've been collecting data as far

as influences and other bands that we like. We wanted to meld all of our experiences together and just have one cohesive unit. And that's what we did.

MRR: WERE THERE BANDS THAT YOU WERE TRYING TO AVOID SOUNDING LIKE? NEGATIVE INFLUENCES.
Daniel: Yeah, bad bands.

MRR: LIKE WHO?
Daniel: Other bands that we've played with. Things like that.

MRR: WHAT IS YOUR IDEAL LINEUP OF A VIDEO SHOW? AS FAR AS OTHER BANDS PLAYING.
Daniel: Video, Video, Video, and Video. That's the only band that could share the stage with us properly.

MRR: AND WHERE WOULD THAT BE?
Daniel: The club with the best sound system. Full of the aforementioned rich, smart people.

MRR: WHAT'S YOUR PLAN FOR REACHING THESE RICH, SMART PEOPLE?
Daneil: Selling out, mainly.

MRR: LIKE, DO YOU WANT TO BE IN COMMERCIALS?
Daniel: Oh, of course.

MRR: NAME A VIDEO SONG, AND THEN NAME WHAT COMMERCIAL IT WOULD BE IN.
Daniel: "Leather Leather" could be for Wilson's Leather.
Harpal: That sounds great.
Daniel: Any of our songs are commercially viable.

MRR: ANY OF THEM ARE GOING TO CONVINCE PEOPLE TO BUY WHATEVER YOU'RE SELLING.
Daniel: Yeah. We're just trying to get as much cash as we could possibly get.

MRR: WHAT'S THE NUMBER ONE WRONG IMPRESSION THAT PEOPLE HAVE OF YOUR BAND?
Daniel: Mainly that we're too hateful, or too negative. In fact, our ideal world, the reason that we have the "hate wave" and the negative, is because we see the world as a better place. We see what it could be. But we're encouraging people to reject what they've been taught, the formalities and the niceness that are instilled amongst the masses. We see a better world, we see a positive world, we see something that we can achieve. Which, obviously, Video is at the top of. That, obviously, we're looking down on everyone.

MRR: DO YOU THINK THAT THE PEOPLE THAT YOU'RE PLAYING FOR DESERVE THAT POSITIVE WORLD?
Daniel: They don't deserve it, but we have to give it anyways.

MRR: DO YOU THINK THAT OTHER BANDS SHOULD TAKE VIDEO AS AN INFLUENCE, OR IS IT EVEN WORTH TRYING?
Daniel: They can try all they want. Other bands, at this point, have tried mimicking what we do. But it's our personnel, it's our influences, it's our lives, it's our experiences that shape why we're the best band in the world. If you're looking towards us an influence, you're only going to get the surface level of our music. It's not the attitude, it's not the look, it's not the talent that we have. They're just going to fail, basically.

MRR: WHAT DO YOU WANT THE LASTING IMPACT OF VIDEO TO BE? WHAT DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO TAKE AWAY FROM YOUR SHOWS, OR FROM YOUR RECORDS?
Daniel: The lasting impact will be seen over time. It will be written in the annals of history, in the history books. People will have to study, in hundreds of years, the impact that Video has had on the world. The positive change that we have enacted. The life-altering music that we've created. The movement that we started. It's going to be in the history books.

MRR: FOR GENERATIONS TO COME?
Daniel: For generations to come.

MRR: IF YOU COULD IMPART ONE LESSON ON YOUR AUDIENCE, WHAT WOULD IT BE?
Daniel: To be something. You should be better than what you think you are. Be like Video. Be someone.

MRR: IF THERE WERE AN AWARD THAT VIDEO WAS TO RECEIVE, WHAT WOULD IT BE?
Daniel: We've already received that award, as being the greatest band of all time.

MRR: THE NEW RECORD, I HEAR, IS A LITTLE BIT DIFFERENT. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE NEW DIRECTION?
Daniel: Previously, our last few records were mainly songs and our influences, musically, that were all just melded together. This is more like our life experiences. It's not necessarily just punk song after punk song. It's our struggle that we have in our day-to-day lives. We have our climb to success. And then we meet our eventual demise.

MRR: OVER THE COURSE OF THE RECORD?
Daniel: Over the course of the record. It's a very epic...masterpiece.

MRR: DO YOU NOT THINK THAT YOUR PREVIOUS RECORDS ARE MASTERPIECES?
Daniel: They are masterpieces in their own regards. This one is by far the best record that we've released. And our next record will probably be better than that, and our next record will be better than that. Because we just keep getting better.

MRR: WHAT INSPIRED THIS NEW TURN FOR THE NEW RECORD?
Daniel: The disgust and contempt that we have for most of humanity.

MRR: BUT YOU'RE NOT A NEGATIVE BAND?
Daniel: No. We have contempt and disgust for the world around us. We want to be the catalyst for change in the world. We want everyone to be more like Video. And to go back to answer the question, mainly frustration. We've been putting out masterpiece after masterpiece and the world hasn't quite taken hold as much as we want it to be. Our world domination has yet to begin. So we wanted to make a record that showed our frustration, showed that we're not going to sit back and take it anymore. We are a catalyst for change and this will help fortify the new world.

MRR: AND THAT'S YOUR GOAL FOR THE NEW RECORD? WHAT DO YOU HOPE THE OUTCOME WILL BE?
Daniel: World domination. I said on our first record that we want the world, and this is one more step towards that goal.

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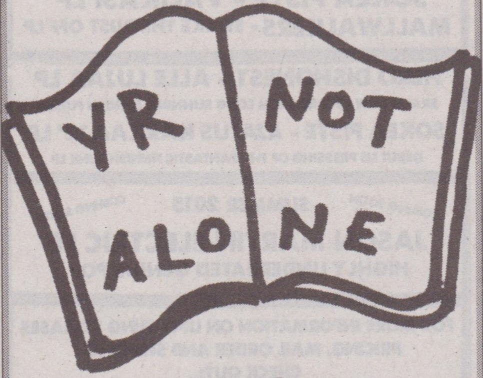

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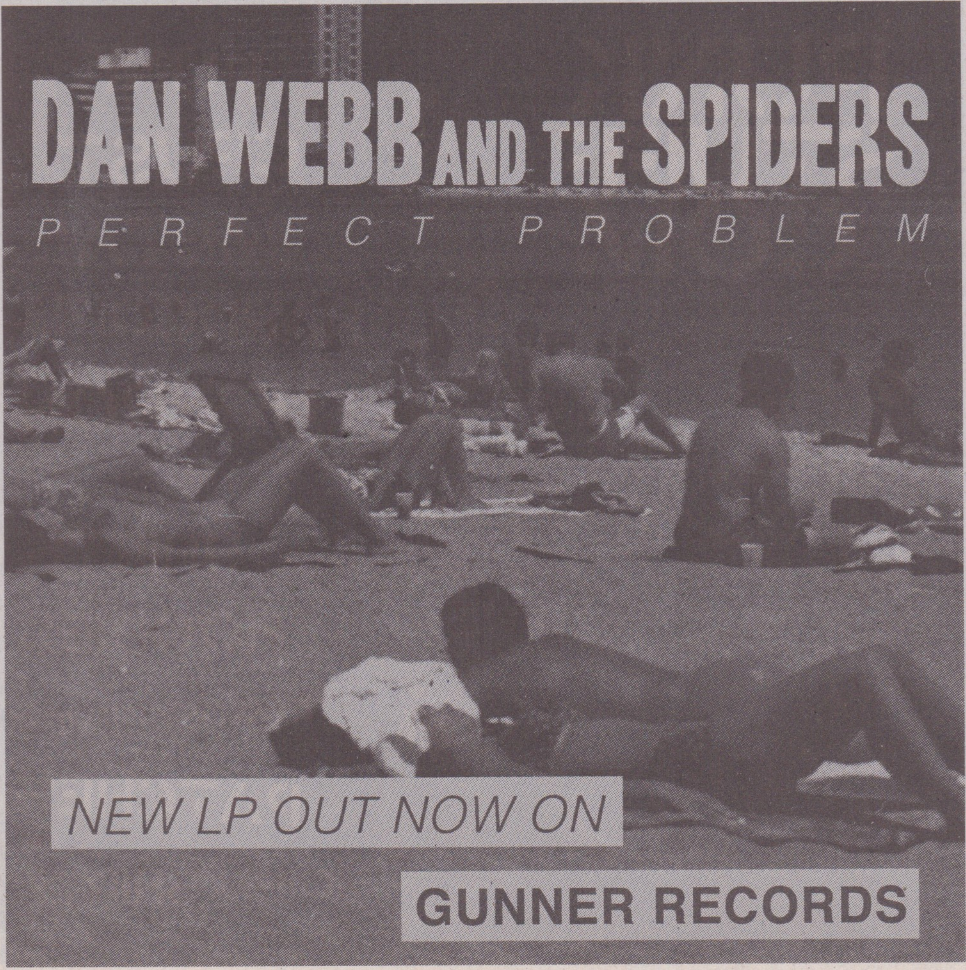

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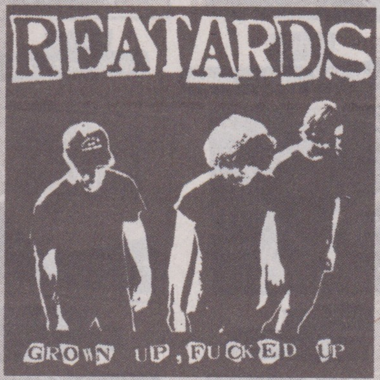

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We met up with Ex-Cult in a bleach scented Tenderloin basement to discuss the mysteries and miseries of slap bass, Lou Reed's Tai Chi record; an attempt to fearlessly query them to find the true Groove Leader in the band, we failed because they're probably too modest or don't know what a Groove Leader is (it's the bass player).
Interview by Layla Gibbon and Brace Belden, photography by Mark Murrmann

MRR: I got really into your band after *Midnight Passenger* came out, it's just got such a total vision. I mean the other LP is really cool, but this one is so complete and total, it's just a great LP, which I think is sort of rare in punk because in some ways it's a real 45 genre…when you were making it did you have sort of a theme in mind of what it would be?
Chris: Well, this was the first one where we wrote songs knowing they were all going to be on one record—the other one was more just a collection of songs we had written at that time. The songs on that record were basically all the songs we had written as a band up to that point. *Midnight Passenger* was written knowing all the songs were going to be on one album, and that's why there are songs on it that explore our sound a little differently than the first album did. There's a lot of stuff on the second album that we don't do live that was written in the studio under the influence of the other songs…
Brace: Who is the passenger there that you are referencing?
Chris: I don't know…

Brace: Not the driver. ***[laughter]***

MRR: How did you discover punk/the underground? Was there a particular point where you were like "I wanna do this!"

Alec: At least for me it was so early on I can't even remember. I've been listening to punk and hardcore really since I started listening to music. After you've gotten past, like, the Rolling Stones, it's pretty inevitable that you're gonna start to pick up on that world if you're inclined to.

Jimmy: I have a sister who is five years older. She hung out with people who skated and were in punk bands, so I got into that kind of stuff too. In late junior high I was hanging out at house parties and community centers watching local punk bands play. Shit that I call mall punk now, Black Flag, Dead Kennedys, that's how I got into it, thinking that she was cool and they were cool…You start to listen to it and they're talking about fucking and drinking and you're a kid, "This is coool!"

Frank: Just been listening to all types of music since I was a child, always open to anything.

Michael: I grew up going to shows at skate parks, and I disliked 90% of the music but I just liked going to the shows, I mean it was to the point where I was like "This is fucking terrible" and it would be Christian metalcore bands and shit, but I just enjoyed being at the show and hanging out with people who weren't like 90% of the people I went to high school with. I can't remember a specific band at all, but I got really interested in the cultural aspect of it. I am sure there were things I saw that influenced me somehow…but I would never want to say that publicly!

MRR: I always like asking people that question because I got into punk in a pretty easy way. When I was super young it was the tenth anniversary of 1977 so all these bands that were on *Top of the Pops* in England back then. I mean the guy that worked at the gas station near my house had a Crass tattoo on his hand, punk was huge in England. So all this stuff would be on TV shows and I got really into it. My mum grew up here, in California, and like saw the Velvet Underground at the Fillmore or whatever, she has Sun Ra records, so discovering music was sort of a given for me…

JB: Does she have a cool record collection? The coolest record my parents have is like…the Mamas and the Papas. If my parents had been into good shit?! Some of us have parents who were into cool shit

Alec: My dad's record collection definitely helped out a lot. He was the first one when I started out listening to like Minor Threat and stuff when I was like thirteen or whatever he walked into my room, "You need these records." He gave me Patti Smith and a Television record…

Chris: That's awesome. I was pretty much like Michael, I used to go to this venue called the Caravan which was all ages show space in Midtown, but it was kind of the same deal, where I liked the camaraderie and the feeling of being a part of something socially that was like that, but most of the bands I saw I was just "This isn't for me." I bought my first punk albums at FYE at the mall probably because I lived in the suburbs but I remember buying the Crass album, *Feeding of the 5000* on CD, and that was the first…I'd heard Black Flag and Minor Threat, the more accessible stuff that JB is talking about, but that was the first one where I was like, oh shit, I better not let my parents find this. This is some dangerous new thing that I found. Even though when you listen to that stuff now it's like this is the corniest shit, when you're a teenager it's like fuck, it doesn't get any more…

Alec: Actually the San Francisco band the Gris Gris I got into when I was sixteen and that was the first time where I was like "I wanna make music that's like this."

MRR: Oh, they were playing a lot when I first moved out here. It's funny when I lived in this apartment complex in Oakland this guy left a pile of mostly bad LPs in the free pile, and one of them was Dr John's *Gris Gris*. I'm always thinking I should get rid of it because I never listen to it, but then I'll put it on…

JB: Oh yeah

Brace: The Gris Gris is a pretty good band but that guy is a dork

Alec: His new stuff is pretty loungey.

Brace: Dude, I played with him once at a punk show, where he played for like over an hour and he had a fucking orchestra with him and it was like sea shanty music.

Alec: Yeah, I think he's put the New Orleans stuff behind him, it's pretty strange

Brace: Speaking of! You guys are from a *reaaal bluuuesy* town, Memphis.

MRR: So you all grew up in Memphis?

Brace: Yeesh no one would move there.

Alec: I think I'm the only transplant.

Chris: I moved here when I was fourteen, I've lived like half my life here.

Brace: The punk there is *garage* punk because of Goner and all of that. Am I right? Am I crazy? Do you find that detrimental to your success in the music business?

Chris: I don't know man, putting out our first record on Goner helped out a lot because it helped us seem a lot more established than we were, but at the same time I don't think we sound like a Goner band necessarily. I think that in the past five years or so that label has branched out and isn't just putting out what you would consider stereotypical Memphis garage rock. I mean for a while that's what they were doing, everyone's spin-off projects from the Oblivians and the Barbaras and all those dudes, that was what they were known for putting out. Over the past few years they've really branched out on what they release and I think we're a good example of that. I mean they're putting out a wide variety of music now as opposed to…

Brace: Tonight I would just do an extended cover of "Good Morning Little Schoolgirl

MRR: Isn't that what you do every day?

Brace: I do it in font of the mirror every day, chicken leg Jagger style.

MRR: How did Ex-Cult form? You all seem pretty young, have you been playing together since you were teenagers?

JB: I'm way older than these guys. You all played together before though?

Michael: Yeah we never really played music together before, I mean we played in that weird band that only ever practiced…

Chris: We had a very short-lived thing where we tried to work up songs in a basement, Michael and I had gotten together, we've all been friends for a long time and we'd get together and talk about how it would be fun to start a band and I'd see JB playing in some of his other bands and knew that it would be cool to try and do something with him. We would talk about it real casually—I mean we talked about it casually for a couple of years! Maybe even longer than that!—before we actually did anything about it, and I think the ideas of what we were going to do changed as we got into different shit. I mean…

JB: I thought it was gonna be a hardcore band

Chris: Yeah I remember it was gonna be some weird later-era Black Flag type shit, that was some of the earliest…

Brace: What genre of music is that? It's a mystery…I mean it's not rock music, it's not hardcore, what is it…I think it's the white man's jazz.

Chris: It's alienating

Michael: It's sex offender jazz

Brace: He's a sex offender now?

Alec: Well I think he's just cruel to his kids and lost his visitation rights.

Brace: I was just thinking about Rollins talking about eating cat food in the shed, why didn't he just go get some bologna? Get some cat food made for humans.

MRR: Well you know that *Get in the Van* diet has all been disproved now, it was all made up. They were living in the back at Greg Ginn's parents' house who made them sandwiches or whatever. I think Henry is just a self-mythologizing type. I'm reading this really cool book about San Pedro punk now, and it's kind of crazy how many cool fucked up bands came from there.

Alec: Saccharine Trust. I'm a Minutemen apologist.

MRR: I didn't get into the Minutemen until I was in my twenties, the slap bass just killed it for me, then suddenly I was driving around and we were listening to *Double Nickels* and it all made sense.

Brace: For me there's not enough slap bass in that band, that's why they suck. The perfect punk song is the Seinfeld theme.

MRR: Someone just told me that's actually a keyboard.

Alec: That's like saying Santa Claus doesn't exist.

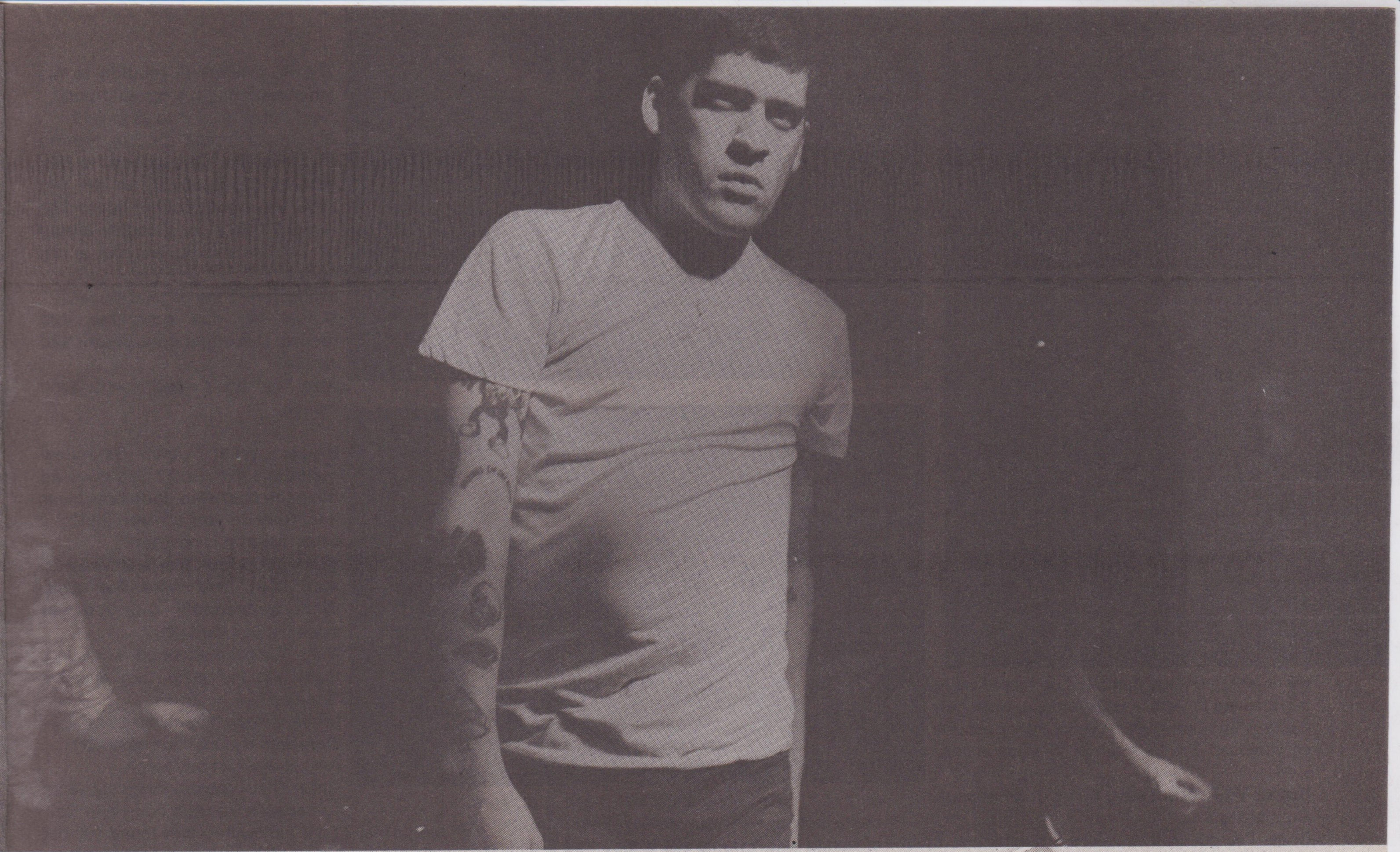
MRR: Is it easier to do a band in Memphis? It seems like everyone there is in fifty bands. Now that San Francisco is so expensive it seems like it has wiped out all the good bands.

JB: Useless Eaters!

Brace: They don't count, they're from Memphis. I met you because you were in a band with a dude from Useless Eaters. The Vile Nation. They really made it big. And, uh, Life Trap.

MRR: Well it always seems like there are a ton of bands and things happening in Memphis, I mean I've never been there or anything, but you have the coolest musical history, like Stax and Big Star and it still seems like a cheap place to live and be a band in, unlike here…

Alec: Well, Memphis has a rich musical heritage, but in terms of people who live there, most people



really do not care about that at all. I mean like seven out of ten people on the street would have no idea what you were talking about.

Brace: Three would know? That many? That's actually kind of cool.
Alec: Three might! Depending on where you were.
JB: In Midtown maybe.
Alec: Yeah, if you were anywhere out of Midtown 100% of people would have no idea what you were talking about.
Chris: I mean it's celebrated there, but it's not like shoved in your face.

MRR: So does the music scene or whatever there feel static?
JB: It's a big scene, a huge range of ages and different kinds of music. All kinds of different stuff, I mean there's an Americana/alt-country thing, there're probably two other punk scenes that exist simultaneously that aren't really integrated at all.
Chris: It's all really segregated

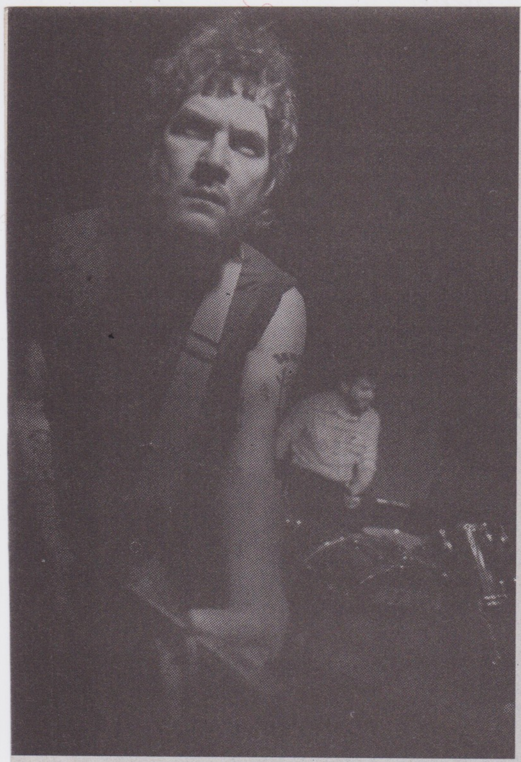
Brace: Between what?
JB: There's this whole other thing called Memphis Punk Fest that's in a few weeks with thirty bands, and I looked through the list and I had never heard of any of them.

MRR: Spikey punks? It seems like those postcard punk types are the most judgmental of all the punks, they separate themselves! If you don't have the right outfit they won't have anything to do with you, they have rules.
JB: Here they do try and reach out, but for me if I don't really like what they're doing musically I'm not going to go see it. It's hard enough for me to get out to the shows I actually do want to see. And likewise, that whole crowd doesn't come see us play.

Brace: Who does go see you play? What's your crowd?
JB: There're more and more people coming out to our shows in the past year or so, there're a lot of colleges out here, we get a lot of college students.
Michael: For a long time college students wouldn't come to shows, now they're starting to.
Alec: If anything it might just be a pure oddity thing though, like we see our friends, the people we know from just going to shows and at any given show there's an unknown quantity who you'll see once and then never comes back.
Chris: Different crowds will come out for different stuff, if there's a band that's got some kind of hype, that's been written about on like *Pitchfork* or whatever, then they have a built in crowd and we'll play a show with a band like that and most of the crowd will be people you've never seen before. They won't be back for your next show because they only care about bands who have that kind of press.

Brace: Well I can kind of see that, but I feel like you guys kind of straddle scenes too I guess. I mean your music is sorta hardcore, but then it's a few different things, and you guys play hardcore shows but you also play those *Pitchfork* type of shows too so…
Alec: Yeah, I feel like this has materialized more recently, I mean we'll play with hardcore bands or with indie rock bands, but in Memphis the pool is a lot smaller so I guess we'll play with different types of bands there, but it's much more extreme when we go on tour…
Chris: Yeah, it's really interesting when we go on tour to see the types of bands we get matched with and see how people interpret our music. "Oh, this is an aggressive punk rock band" and they'll put us with those type of bands, or they'll have only read a review on some mainstream website and we'll play with more indie or garage-type bands. A lot of the time the bands we play with are a reflection of whoever is booking it, whoever likes our music there and it's just the way they interpret it. I mean we've gotten everything. There're only so many descriptions you can write under a band's name before it doesn't even make sense anymore. "Hardcore punk psyche garage"—what the fuck is that? You just listed a lot of different things, you know.

Brace: I feel like that's always been a problem in rock criticism though
MRR: Well, because of the internet everyone is a critic blogger-type now.
Michael: Somebody wrote something that said we sounded like the Strokes, which I thought was pretty funny.
Chris: When we first started people said all kinds of stupid shit like that.
JB: That was four years ago when the first single came out, so it sort of makes sense for then maybe? There's just so much shit out there. We don't get a lot of direct comparisons like that really.
Alex: It's more people genre creating with four random names.
Chris: When people ask us to describe our music the description that gets most used is that we're a high-energy punk band. We're not just some punk band that's put out one single, so yeah the sound is gonna change and we're gonna pull from all types of different genres, we're not just gonna write the same old two-minute punk song over and over and over. I mean as you keep releasing stuff and writing new material, new ideas are gonna work their way in, that's a great thing. I don't want to be in a band that just writes the same album over and over again, then tours on it. I think live we've gotten to the point where everyone knows



we're a high-energy band, but on record we're still pushing to work new sounds in, work new ideas in that don't just stay in a very neat box or whatever. There's room for all kinds of shit.

Brace: You sort of sing in a British accent. Am I crazy?
Chris: I've gotten that before, I don't know, I just sing how I sing. Maybe I should start a fake British band?
Michael: People have said that, but I think it's just a meter thing, it's just a meter that's really common…

MRR: It's funny because I never even thought that and I'm from London.
Chris: Yeah, I mean I like a lot of British frontmen.
Brace: Wattie?
Michael: Yeah, what a master of delivery.
Brace: He's the Mick Jagger of the '80s
MRR: That's a band I didn't hear til someone played it at *Maximum*! I only listened to '77 punk when I was twelve or thirteen but I never heard the Exploited
Chris: Then you loved it.
MRR: I probably looked at their records and just knew it wasn't what I wanted.
Brace: It's like Damned records from the '90s
MRR: My dad was a roadie for the Damned in the '70s. He wasn't a punk or anything. He also roadied for Supertramp and Dire Straits when they were in the pub rock circuit. He doesn't like punk so he gave me all those records. You're only into British singers?
Chris: Well I'm really into Mark E. Smith, TV Smith, but I also really like Darby Crash, Tomata DuPlenty, the singer from the Middle Class… All the singers from those *Messthetics* compilations, that off-kilter delivery, it's unique you know, as opposed to just singing like you're in a bar rock band. That shit *can* be cool, but I don't think I can do it.
MRR: That's cool only if you have a wild voice like Chris Bailey, his delivery is…
Brace: Yeah he has the coolest voice. Your voice isn't annoying.
Alec: What if someone wrote that in a review, "his voice isn't annoying"
Chris: I feel like in punk and hardcore that's a big part of it, there are bands that made it or were broke because of the vocalist. There are plenty of bands who I would like if they had a different singer.

Brace: Let's talk about grooves. You guys fall into a groove alright. So who's the groove leader? Michael?
Michael: Groove leader?!? *[laughs]* Yeah, it's all about the rhythm section man!
Brace: So who leads the rhythm section then?
[awkward silence]
MRR: It's just a collective! One of the things I really like about Ex-Cult is that groove thing he is talking about, I mean I might be totally off base here but it totally makes me think of listening to Krautrock and driving, it's really good driving music.
Michael: Well the rhythms for that early Krautrock stuff, the drummers are doing almost nothing, it's just the best for that kind of music, what they're trying to achieve with their sound, it's the perfect thing for that drummer to be doing, it's all they should be doing, that 4/4 rhythm. We use a lot of repetitious rhythm, the drums and the bass pretty much playing the same thing for a long amount of time, it allows everyone else to experiment more when we lock into that steady rhythm. They can go all over the place and the song still stays coherent.

MRR: When you listen to the Velvet Underground live stuff, people always talk about what a childlike drummer Moe Tucker is, but man she really holds it down so that the rest of them can just go off.
Michael: Yeah people say that all the time, I think it's really stupid. "She's a bad drummer" No, I mean, would the Velvet Underground sound good with some technical dude? That music is so good because of how simple the drumming is.
Chris: *The Blue Mask?* Is that what we were listening to? Have you heard that?
Brace: Oh I've heard every Lou Reed record. *The Blue Mask* in relation to his other records? It's not that bad.
Alec: But in relation to all music?
Brace: All music it's like bottom 1%, but like in relation to his records it's probably in the top 70%. Have you fucking heard *The Raven??* He's got a double album of Tai Chi music, he has a rap song!
Michael: He's the original rapper.
Brace: My dad gave me that record. Does that constitute child abuse?
Alec: That music video is pretty good though.

Brace: What other interview questions are there? You guys all have the best skin, look how clear it is. How do you achieve this?
Chris: My skin is not clear
Brace: You look like a Bollywood star. Wait. You were Sex Cult. What happened?! Did you get sued by Sex Cult INC?
Chris: We got threatened to be sued, there was this thing, they called it *Bro-step?*
Michael: Yeah they called it Bro-step, there was a production company…
Alec: It was just dub step
Chris: They probably found out about us because we were coming to New York to play? I don't know how they found out, but we'd put out two singles, and we got this call from the label we're on saying we were gonna have to change our name because they were threatening to sue. They threatened all this stupid shit, who knows if they could have even done it or not, we just changed it.

MRR: Ex-Cult is a cooler name.
Chris: Eventually we'll drop the E and add a dash just to keep people on their toes.
Brace: Then it'll be just the dash.
Alec: Just keep shaving it down.

Brace: Speaking of which, what is your favorite cult?
MRR: I got this map of all the different utopian communities that have formed in Southern California since like the 1800s, it's pretty cool, something about this state attracts people who want to start a new reality
Chris: I would like to see that. I would say Yahowha 13, those are some pretty cool individuals. Father Yod shines down on us whenever we're in California.
Brace: There's this thing in Russia called the Skoptzy, one of those nonsense Russian words. It was the 1900s, its main tenet is that you cut off your dick. You didn't wanna feel anything, any physical things, so people would cut off their breasts, people would blind themselves. They were told to stop by the state so they did, but there're pictures of them. You got anything else you want to talk about?
Chris: Where can we go get Shanghai'd in San Francisco?
MRR: There are these sort of steam punk tours that meet up outside my work where the group leader is all dressed up ye olde tyme style that could tell you. It's funny, most of the tours that I hear like on the busses as they go past City Lights or whatever, the shit they are saying

is just not true. It makes me think I could do a tour where I get paid to just make shit up, "And this is where Christ was risen." Actually, Brace, you would be a really good tour guide.
Brace: People have told me that, but I can't drive.
Michael: You could do the Segway Tours.
MRR: A Segway tour would really be the end of punk for you.
Brace: Rincon did it in Memphis, you can go down stairs. Hey, is Graceland II closed now?
JB: Yeah he died. Someone was trying to break in and he shot them, then the next day he died of a heart attack. I probably haven't been there in six or seven years.
Brace: I went once. He had Elvis' cum right? Someone told me he had a pillow with Elvis' cum on it
JB: I haven't heard that shit!
Alec: When you went he would show you the same things and say something different about it each time. He has a bag of underwear, and one time he said it was a bag of underwear of women that Elvis has slept with, and another time he said it was a bag of underwear of women who were so into the tour they just took their underwear off and left them there. Mostly schizophrenia at work I think.
Brace: He had a lot of guns, who would break into his house? American paranoia is real thing, shooting an intruder in your home.
Alec: Then dying of a heart attack.

Brace: What else should we talk about? Who does the sickest guitar solos?
Alec: JB, man. He can at least *do* guitar solos. I can't do a guitar solo.
JB: I can do a good shitty guitar solo.
Frank: But you want it to be shitty. If it sounds too good, it's fucked up.

MRR: The best guitar solos are those two note Buzzcocks style…
Brace: No, the one note Misfits style. You seem sad. You seem kind of down. You're all brooding. Frank, why are you so quiet.
Frank: Just California stoned.
Chris: Nobody gets sad.
Alec: Nobody is allowed to be sad.

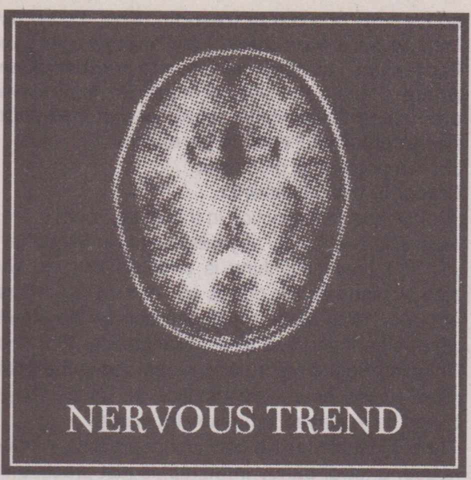
MRR: A relentlessly happy band, that's part of the cult.
Chris: We all get along pretty well, we've been touring together for like three years now.

MRR: Do you have jobs you just leave and get a new job after tour?
Alec: Our jobs are cool with us leaving.
Chris: I do my job on the road. I'm a music writer. I mean, we have to pick and choose what we do, we can't all like go on tour three months out of the year.
Alec: Going out on the road means that we are missing out on getting paid at our jobs though. Most of us have full-time jobs.
JB: I work for a property management company, I paint apartments, it's easy. I can just come and go when I want to.

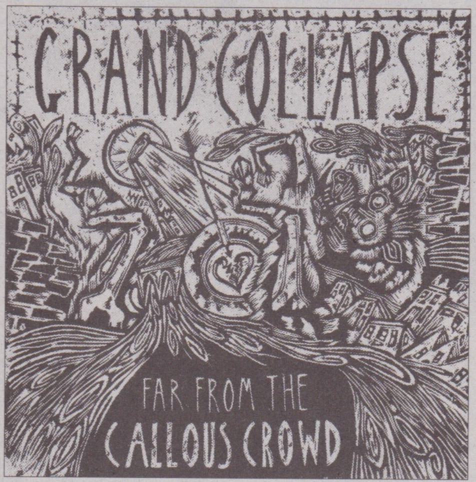
MRR: My work is like that, it's structured from an era of San Francisco when it was really bohemian and cheap to live here, so we can take whatever time off we want, I could go live in an ashram for six months and still have a job or whatever. But SF isn't like that anymore, so it's sort of a harsh freedom. Now it's super hard to do a band here, I am always trying to figure out if I should just move to another place where you don't have to have an expensive practice space to make music or like lose your apartment if you want to go on tour.
JB: We practice in my house.
Brace: In the basement?
JB: It floods. We practice in the dining room.
Alec: There're hardly any basements in Memphis
JB: The practicing thing is cool. As long as we stop by nine with the drums and shit my neighbors are cool. Nots used to practice across the street when Charlotte lived there. Manateees, that first Reigning Sound record was rehearsed in the front room of the house we practice in, so all these bands have played in houses for years.
Chris: Most places it's cool just to practice in your house, a lot of bands in Memphis just practice in their houses. I mean people do rent spaces but that's pretty rare.
Alec: Yeah, I rent a storage unit for another project and Nots, who we're friends with, rent a storage unit in the same lot, but it's literal hell. There're three metalcore bands, a mariachi band and a reggae band that we have to contend with on our floor.
JB: Sounds like my kind of party.

Brace: Didn't Natalie used to be in your band before you decided to be an all-male band? What's it like being in an all-male band? Was it a conscious decision?
Frank: Let's go to North Beach, we got people to meet.

excult.tumblr.com



1859 RECORDS



There's an old cliché that DIY punk is a labor of love. While the phrase may be overused it's probably because it's true. While we often focus on the "love" part of the equation—the music, the bands, having fun with friends and community—the "labor" side is just as important. It takes a lot of hard work to keep our communities alive, and it can be hard work to live by your values. Based out of Corvallis, Oregon, 1859 Records is effectively a one-person operation made up of Dustin Herron, who also plays in hardcore punk band Abolitionist. Run in the spare hours outside of his job as a cardiac nurse, the hard work that's gone into the label has started to bear fruit. Its increasingly diverse and expanding roster of bands has released a great run of records over the last few years. As the label continues to find its stride Dustin took some time out from his hectic schedule to talk about 1859 Records including the significance of its name, intersections between punk and nursing, and how the label operates. Interview and introduction by Justin George.

MRR: Take us on a journey back in time. Tell the tale of how the label got off the ground.

It started back in 2010 after I'd started a punk band [Abolitionist] with the intention of it being a band that released records, played shows, and toured a bit. In the back of my mind, I was thinking about releasing music for other bands, but I wanted to focus on my own artistic endeavours first. *[laughs]* Plus, I had no idea how to release a record in the beginning, so I figured the trial and error bit made the most sense when applied to myself. I realized eventually that putting out records isn't that difficult, but it is very expensive and, over the years, has taken increasingly longer to get the final product. The turnaround for the first Abolitionist 7" was something like four weeks from time of submission to time of arrival. Now it's three or four months! To be honest, this lag generally applies to the busier/cheaper companies, like Rainbo and United. I've used Gotta Groove recently for a couple projects and they're actually pretty fast; the quality/customer service is also fantastic. They are, of course, rather expensive!

MRR: What is the timeframe involved from that first 7" to now? How many years has the label been active?

That first Abolitionist 7" was released back in March 2010…which I just now realized. Wow.

MRR: Is the label a one person operation? How much do you do yourself?

It is just me for the most part. My partner, Krista, helps me assemble records when there's a big project. She also helps a bit with shipping. She's a trooper!

MRR: What's the significance of the year 1859 to you, given that it's the name of your label? Why has that history resonated with you?

Two-fold: it's the year that my home state, Oregon, became "official" and it's also the year that John Brown led his ill-fated slave insurrection at Harper's Ferry, Virginia. I love Oregon, and am proud to have been born here, to some extent, but I'm also aware that it was originally intended to be a state "free" from Black people. It was literally illegal for Black people to live in Oregon in the beginning! I see a strong parallel between that legacy, the legacy of John Brown, and the current state of race relations in this country. It seemed natural to name the record label after this significant year.

MRR: You and your band Abolitionist are politically and socially outspoken and active. Do you take the same approach to 1859 Records? Do you run it along certain principles or model structures?

I don't think it's anything overtly conscious, really. I just try to be a decent person in everything I do, and I'd like to think that would

carry over to my "business" dealings with the label. I think my dad was an influence on me in that regard. I watched him build a solid reputation for quality work and good customer service as a self-employed cabinetmaker, in addition to his other hobby-type endeavours. I think observing that integrity had a positive impact on me and how I approach 1859.

MRR: You have what I imagine to be both a rewarding and demanding job as a nurse. Is 1859 Records, or punk rock in general, an escape from perhaps what you see day in day out? I'm guessing the hours can be long and tiring.
Yeah, I've been involved in health care for a while now, since 2001, when I first became an EMT. Nursing can definitely be rewarding, and demanding, but it's like any other job. Working my current specialty as a cardiac nurse is a bit less demanding than my previous specialty area of emergency nursing. Good days, bad days, days where you feel like you're paid too much, days where you feel like you aren't paid enough. I work twelve-hour shifts, but only three a week with a good schedule, so there's a healthy balance overall. I think running the label has been a distraction from the challenges of that particular work, for sure. It's also something I'm able to do financially because of the work, which is nice. There's definitely an element of sadness in the work that I do, so listening to heavy, fast, or loud music can definitely be therapeutic!

MRR: Does your nursing work and your love of punk music have any relation? Any unexpected overlaps you've noticed?
I think both are rooted in compassion, so I definitely see a relation. There are plenty of those who feel punk rock is about not giving a shit, but to me it's always been about giving back in some way, and giving a shit that things in the world are totally fucked up and unfair, the game is stacked, humans are collectively selfish and short-sighted, etc., and giving a voice to that frustration. Direct action, to any large or small degree, is better than sitting back and complaining, not doing anything at all. I mean, I could certainly do a lot more personally to walk the walk, but I'm glad I at least have a job where I can advocate for the vulnerable, speak up for patients and stand up to doctors when necessary, because we usually work as a team, and have a job where I'm actively striving every day to "do no harm" and help get people well, even if I have my own judgments on how they got unwell in the first place such as from animal-based diets.

MRR: So your first release was the Abolitionist 7" in 2010. When did you expand out to release bands other than Abolitionist?
I very briefly did a punk zine called *Brain Storm Zine* and had the brilliant idea to do a professionally duplicated benefit CD, *Give Back Volume 1*, for a local wildlife rehab center with one of the issues. I solicited a variety of punk bands I was listening to at the time, which were heavily on the melodic side back then. I realized I had a lot of fun interacting with everyone and being a "label guy." I even had some bands I was really into contribute some exclusive stuff, namely Crusades, which was awesome. I guess that was kind of when I got the bug, so to speak.

MRR: Were you approached at all by any of the bands? If not for the benefit CD then for other releases?
I've been mostly proactive in seeking out bands to release music for. That's not to say people haven't asked, but the ones I've been the most stoked on, and eventually help out, tend to be ones I contact first. Strangeweather was an exception, but I was already friends with Josh; putting out their stuff just made sense, as it's amazing.

MRR: What was at stake with that first non-Abolitionist release? Was there a degree of pressure?
I consider the first non-Abolitionist release to be the No///Se 7" that they put out for their last European tour. They posted something on the internet about needing a label to help with the vinyl pressing—they already had the covers taken care of—and I immediately emailed them. I was already pretty into the band, their first LP is so good, and I figured they were well-known enough (considering they have ex-members of Young Livers, Youth Brigade, Glass & Ashes, and Stop Breathing) that it was worth the investment. I split that with Alan from Different Kitchen Records in the UK which was the first of a few joint projects with him, and I suppose that was when I really got interested in this whole DIY label thing!

MRR: Does your work with the label and the bands on it inspire you?
I have a fairly cynical take on the impact our species has had on our planet, in both the socio-political and environmental realms, which can definitely be intertwined. It's weird, because I sometimes feel a lot of contempt for humanity and the way we sometimes take a big shit on anything beautiful in this world. However I also get really inspired and hopeful when I see people fighting back against asshole corporations or just plain bullies in everyday life. Whether that's from discovering a rad new band that speaks to my musical or political aesthetic, or when animal rights activists directly help those suffering, or when vegan restaurants spring up, or animal sanctuaries are supported, or national parks get established... or when people are kind to each other in the grocery store or while driving...blah blah blah. I guess the point is it's not all doom and gloom. Although that can be pretty rad too.

MRR: How much do you try to separate your work on the label from that of your band?

VICIOUS PLEASURES

Well, at this point, it's pretty much all 1859 Records. Abolitionist recently recorded a new album, *The Vicious Rumor*, but I've had zero interest in playing shows. No one else seems particularly bothered by that, which is fine! [laughs] It was fun while it lasted. I might start the band up again in the future, but it makes way more sense to focus on the label, my personal relationships, and other adult stuff. I do plan on putting the album out on CD, cassette, and possibly vinyl at some point in the future. The art and layout that Horsebites did for it turned out really well. He's incredible.

MRR: How do you approach the business side of things, given that it's hard for DIY labels these days to stay afloat?
Man, I am not a good person to ask about this. I guess I wish I'd taken the advice of some people early on and not over-committed to projects. That's been my main problem. I definitely got too excited about getting the name out there! That said, I really do love all the music I'm helping release. I also am fortunate in that I have a job that can help eventually cover label costs if the sales aren't there, as well as a supportive partner. Anyhow, I definitely keep the numbers reasonable, 300 to 500 per pressing. Some bands are cool enough to let me have their releases available in the digital format, too, which can help cover some of the costs, though most people buy the vinyl. I hate to say it, but I think I'm going to do more CD releases and fewer vinyl releases. People still do buy CDs, and vinyl is so expensive and time-consuming, not to mention bulky. I love vinyl, for sure, but it can definitely be a hassle.

MRR: You've recently posted online about expanding the label's distribution. What are you seeking to do differently? How did you previously approach it and what are you seeking to do now?
Well, I've definitely come to realize that distribution is really important to a small, independent label. I realize this sounds naive, but I'll admit that I was extremely naive to begin with. Mail order is great but I haven't found it to be sustainable. I'm starting with Ebullition, and it seems to be going well, but time will tell. I've definitely learned that when it comes to releasing records, patience is key.

MRR: How important is distribution to smaller labels in general? Do you think it's as viable or more effective than various online platforms and other methods of getting music into people's ears?
I think it will prove crucial to the long-term survival of the label. Even just trading is a good way to get people hearing the music, even if it doesn't directly result in a lot of money. Although it depends on who you trade with, which is why I'm selective. Advertising is good, but really doesn't translate into a lot of orders. Exclusive streams are definitely beneficial, and I plan on doing a bit more of that with my releases. The internet is so weird; I don't know why I'm still getting used to it after 20 years. *[laughs]*

MRR: You're now based in Corvallis after beginning in Portland in the Pacific Northwest. What are some of the benefits of being based there? What led to the move?
The main benefit to being based in Corvallis is that there are far fewer people than Portland! That's kind of it. I've lived there three times in my life, this last time of two and a half years being the longest. I'm not a city person and while I love Portland there are just too many people for my comfort level. Corvallis is nice, and I grew up a few miles outside of it, so it's nice being closer to home, which was the main impetus behind the move. I do miss the record shops, constantly awesome shows, people my age with tattoos, and high-quality vegan food options that exist throughout Portland, but I can get my fill from the occasional visit since it's less than an hour and a half away! Plus, my warehouse space for the label is way cheaper in Corvallis versus Portland. Definitely.

MRR: Any Corvallis bands on the label?
Nope. It's weird, because when I was growing up there were several that I would have definitely released stuff for. Some members of those bands went on to form Atriarch and Witch Mountain, among others. Now it's just a lot of music I enjoy listening to on occasion, but it wouldn't fit the 1859 "aesthetic" whatever that might be. I dunno, maybe someday.

MRR: The label is starting to really find its stride. What are the aims or hopes as you continue? Do you have a long-term plan or a vision for what you want the label to be?
Thanks! The primary aim and hope right now is to not burn myself out. I sometimes feel I'm getting close… and that's my fault. I've learned a valuable lesson, regarding pacing of releases. I'm just trying to stay positive at the moment. My long-term plan is not burn any bridges with bands and other labels. Backing out of projects is not something I ever feel good about and I've had to do it more than I'm comfortable with. Otherwise continue to release quality, dark music, continue to operate with honesty and integrity, and develop a level of sustainability that creative people want to be a part of for years to come.

1859records.wordpress.com

Discography:
1859-1: Abolitionist 7" (March 2011)
1859-2: Abolitionist *It Used To Rain* LP/CD (June 2011)
1859-3: Fools Rush/Abolitionist split 7" (January 2012)
1859-4: V/A *Give Back (Vol. 1)* digital/CD compilation, featuring unreleased tracks from Crusades, Tuck & Roll, French Exit, The Anchor, Abolitionist and many others (Feb 2012) (released with *Brain Storm Zine* 2)
1859-5: Five-band comp tape split between Abolitionist/Tuck & Roll/Rev. Loose Morals/Pillowfights and one more (split release w/ North by Northwest Records) (April 2012)
1859-6: Abolitionist Bleeding Kansas digital EP (June 2012)
1859-7: Gunner's *Daughter Dissolutions* CD-EP (August 2012)
1859-8: Abolitionist *The Growing Disconnect* CD (March 2013)
1859-9: Abolitionist *The Growing Disconnect* LP (June 2013)
1859-10: V/A *Give Back (Vol. 2)* digital/CD (Burnt Cross, Abolitionist, Resist, Trial, NO///sé, Chicken's Call, Wide Angles and more)
1859-11: NO///sé *Beach Bathroom Bingo* 7" (split release with Different Kitchen Records UK) (2013)
1859-12: Abolitionist/Rubrics split 7" (split release w/ Get Better, DKR, Drunken Sailor and seven more) (2014)
1859-13: Grand Collapse *Far From The Callous Crowd* LP (2014)
1859-14: Nervous Trend s/t one-sided 12" EP (w/ screened B-side; split release with Black Wire Records, Australia) (2014)
1859-15: Vicious Pleasures 7" EP (split release with DKR) (2014)
1859-16: Blackbird Raum *Under The Starling Host* LP (2014)
1859-17: Wretched of the Earth *Fire To Their Houses* LP (2014)
1859-18: Pageripper *Bruce Jams, Vol. III* one-sided 12" EP (with screened B-side) (split release w/ DKR) (2015)
1859-19: NO///sé *Lower Berth* LP (split with Man-In-Decline Records) (2015)
1859-20: Dark Circles *MMXIV* LP (split with Replenish Records and more) (2015)
1859-21: The Siege Fire *Dead Refuge* LP (split with Dead Tank Records) (2015)
1859-22: Sol *Black Mountain* LP (2015)
1859-23: Vukari *En To Pan* 12" EP (2015)
1859-24: Blackbird Raum *Swidden* 2xLP (2015)
1859-25: Strangeweather LP (2015)

FUTURE:
1859-26: Sol 2xLP (to be recorded in October 2015 w/ Billy Anderson)

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All photos by Zev Smith-Danford except for those marked by *, which are by Anders Ericcson and Jasdeep Kang. Clockwise from above: Monte*, Aye Nako, crowd outside Billy DeFrank Center, Agatha, Bad Daddies*, Underpass.

TeRRY HAMMeR

Terry Hammer was a part of the earliest moments of the punk explosion in the Bay Area. I became interested in early San Francisco punk history after I moved to the Bay Area but my obsession began when trying to track down information on Mary Monday. This turned up a whole history on Mabuhay Gardens where she and many early punk acts played. I found an in-depth website Terry had compiled years ago and I got in touch with him wanting to know more about that premier punk palace, early punk days of punk on the airwaves, managing Toxic Reasons (one of America's most powerful punk hardcore bands) and his live recordings from that important epoch in punk history.

Interview and introduction by Amelia Eakins.

MRR: I was doing research on early San Francisco punk when I stumbled upon your Angelfire site on the Mabuhay Gardens, documenting your involvement in early punk. Why do you feel it's important to document those early days?
The Sex Pistols changed everything. All of a sudden, there was this entire new exciting scene happening by people who couldn't play their instruments that well but said *fuck it!* Local radio stations refused to play this new music with the exception of one commercial station, KSAN-FM in San Francisco. There was this fantastic DJ there named Richard Gossett who would go over to Europe every October for Oktoberfest and he would bring back all of these amazing punk records he got.

It wasn't long before Howie Klein and Chris Knab talked KSAN into letting them do an hour of punk on Saturday nights called *The Heretics*. It was great to hear this new exciting music that all of these great UK bands were putting out in a DIY fashion because the major labels ignored them. It wasn't long after starting this that the Sex Pistols played their last concert at San Francisco's Winterland on January 14, 1978 with local bands the Avengers and the Nuns. Jello Biafra and many other punks attending the show decided that they wanted to do the same thing after that night. It wasn't long before punk bands started sprouting up all over the Bay Area.

College stations started to have one-hour programs playing punk rock. It was in late 1978 that I decided to take it a step further and started doing a full four-hour radio program playing nothing but punk. San Francisco was busting wide open with bands playing their own three-chord music and they needed places to play as most clubs refused to recognize them until the Mabuhay stepped up. All of the bands from the UK were touring and this was such an exciting time that will *never* be duplicated or seen again. It had to be documented in some way so Joe Rees started Target Video along with Jill Hoffman, Jackie Sharp, Sam Edwards, and several others to record the events on video. But there was no one recording the complete shows on audio. I just felt it was my duty to preserve and document these shows so that future generations would be able to enjoy it.

MRR: Since you were involved in Bay Area radio back then, did you knew Tim Yo?
I knew Tim well. Most of us in the scene knew each other from listening to each other's radio shows, running into each other at the venues, and so on. I also worked for Rough Trade Records on Grant Street and Tim would come in all the time. I gave Tim tracks from my live recordings to play on his *MRR* show on KPFA.

MRR: What was your connection to Dirk Dirksen?
We were partners in my weekly radio program that was called *Fab Mab Live*. I approached Dirk about recording the bands there on the weekends on either a Friday or Saturday night and broadcasting them on KALX later the next week. I wanted to record the local bands and give them exposure on the radio because the commercial stations refused to recognize and support them. Most of those bands didn't even have a record out yet and some never even put a record out. I wanted to give them exposure to an audience who either could not attend the shows or were too young to be able to get into the clubs. Also, Dirk asked me if I would do the sound at the Mabuhay on Sunday and Monday nights to give Chris Grayson a couple days off. Starting May of 1981, I was also a sound engineer at the Mab. Dirk was also just starting to put on shows at On Broadway upstairs part time on Fridays and Saturdays, so I became the first sound engineer at the On Broadway for him as well. I did this until the end of July 1981.

MRR: Give us some background on the Mabuhay Gardens.
It was a failing Filipino nightclub owned by Ness Aquino. Dirk approached Ness in 1978 and started putting on shows and it just blossomed from there. Some people call it the West Coast's version of CBGBs. A guy named Jerry Paulson actually put on shows at the Mab before Dirk took over. He booked Blondie, Devo, the Damned, Dictators, and several other shows before Dirk. He also booked Mary Monday.

MRR: I love Mary Monday—that's what kicked off my fascination with early San Francisco punk. So, what was the first show you went to at the Mab?
I'm not sure because my memory isn't what it used to be! I didn't start going to the Mab until early 1979. It was probably an Avengers or Mutants show.

MRR: What about the last?
My last…I'm not really sure either! It might have been a Hüsker Dü show their first time out to SF in July '81.

MRR: How'd you get involved at KALX?
I got involved with KALX through a friend Moe Armstrong, who I met in broadcast school we were both attending. He took me to his Saturday morning show and afterwards he showed me how everything worked. Then he said he had to go somewhere and asked me to take over his shift. So for the next three hours I had a blast! After that, I was hooked and joined the KALX staff. I ended up doing a Sunday morning show. I came on right after a guy doing a Sunday morning religious program. Boy, did I ever wake the people up going from religion to punk!

MRR: I think your idea of recording live shows and airing them on KALX was brilliant. How did you do it? What equipment did you use?
Well, I noticed that KALX had a cheap 12-channel Peavey mixing desk and a snake and splitter but they weren't using it much. I started helping out the chief engineer with the live shows. He wasn't too excited about punk music, I could tell that because we were doing

more mainstream bands like Sons of Champlain and Cindy Bullens. In fact, KALX was only a ten-watt mono station at that time and we were taping in mono. KALX finally bought a couple of stereo Technics RS-1500 reel-to-reel two-track decks after my suggestion. We did about two more shows and then I took over and started doing the live remotes myself. I got the music director Lou Wave to start contacting the labels of the UK bands that were touring and get permission to broadcast them as well as doing the local punk and New Wave bands. I've recorded live shows from the Old Waldorf, Mabuhay, American Indian Center, the Stone, California Hall, Civic Center Park, Boarding House, Back D.O.R., Keystone Berkeley, Berkeley Square, Pauley Ballroom, Zellerbach Auditorium, and Lower Sproul Plaza. I think I mentioned them all?

MRR: What was your first recording like?
My first recording that I took over doing the live remotes was Ultravox in March 1979. After that, I started doing live remotes at least once a month. I followed that up with the Mutants and 999 at the Old Waldorf in April '79, and then Pearl Harbor and the Explosions at Zellerbach Auditorium, also April '79. It's very hard to mix a live show on a cheap twelve-channel mixing desk direct to two-track reel-to-reel using headphones. If you've ever been to a live show, then you know how loud the PA sound is. So imagine sitting in that loud club with headphones on and trying to drive the amp in your mixing desk loud enough to override the house PA to hear what you are mixing! It's almost impossible and sometimes the recordings suffer from guitars or keyboards or vocals too low in the mix or vocals too loud at times. I was lucky that I was eventually able to get KALX to purchase the two Technics RS-1500 reel-to-reel tape decks to record in stereo. Before that I had to use an Ampex mono recorder.

MRR: How do you think you got the best sound?
Well, I had to experiment a lot. If there was room, I either set up at the side of the stage away from the PA speakers, behind the stage, or in a different room if I had that option, like [at] the Old Waldorf and Berkeley Square. A sixteen-channel board would've been better than the twelve-channel I used.

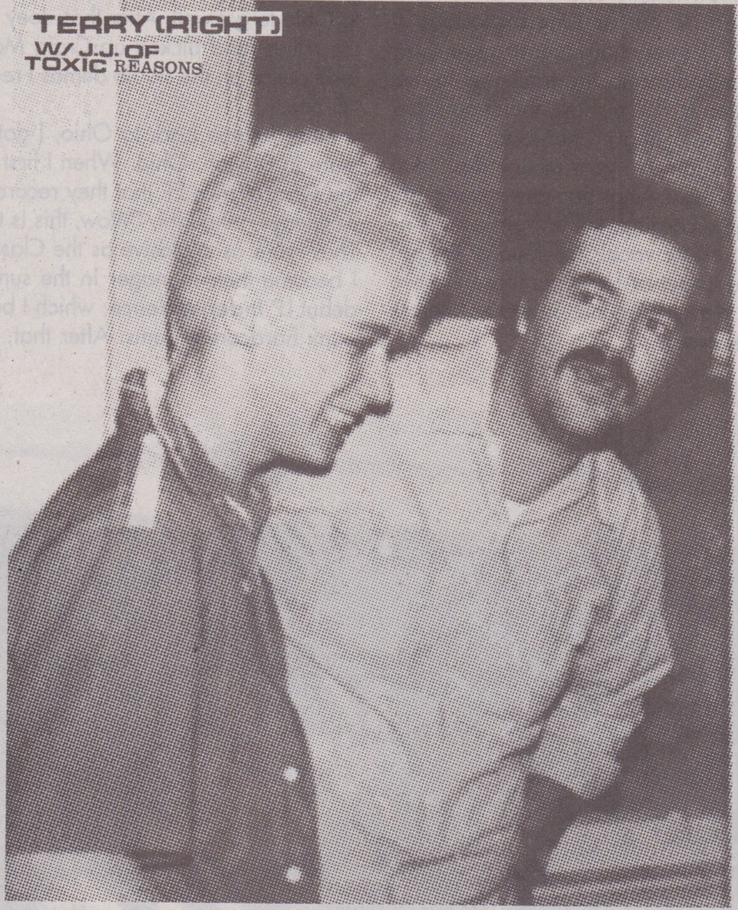
MRR: So you mastered recording bands and then you started managing them. How'd you start managing bands?
I don't know, I was just a fan of a lot of bands and thought I might be able to help some out. My first band I managed was the Saucers from Berkeley. Joey Michaels, the singer and keyboard player, was also working at KALX. It was Joey Michaels on vocals and keyboard, David Valasquez guitar and vocals, Jake Smith on drums, and Shelly Wolfe on bass. They were popular in the Bay Area and had a tape of a song called "Piggy's Jukebox" that got airplay on KALX. *Punk Globe* picked them as the best new band of 1980 along with Romeo Void. When I got sick in August '81, I stopped managing them and moved back here to Ohio to get well. After that, Joey left, the band changed its name to the Allies, and picked up Craig Magee from Dyan Diamond to play lead guitar on the studio demos I recorded of "Disposed Dictator" and "Drone."

After I came back to Ohio, I got in touch with Toxic Reasons who were in Dayton, Ohio. When I first heard their single *War Hero* and the *Ghost Town* EP that they recorded with East Bay Ray of the Dead Kennedys, I thought, "Wow, this is the best hardcore band in the US." They were as explosive as the Clash. "I have to manage these guys!" I became their manager in the summer of '82 and we finished their debut LP *Independence*, which I believe is still one of the top ten best punk hardcore albums. After that, I moved the band from Dayton to

San Francisco where their label Risky was located. I left the band at the end of December '82 after Ed decided to quit the band. I thought we should get a lead singer to replace Ed, but the band wanted to sing the songs themselves. I didn't think any of them had the voice to be a lead singer, so we parted ways. I'm glad they continued to carry on for another 20 years or so in various forms but I stand by my decision that they just weren't the same without Ed. I'm glad to say that Ed has finally resurfaced and is fronting a punk band from Dayton called New Regrets.

MRR: Why did bands need a manager back then? I feel like today a band with a "manager" just means a band sold out or made it big as today we really can book our own shows and tours.
Well, that's always going to be debatable because bands can manage themselves but sometimes it's best to have a manager to take care of everything for you like bookings, collecting payment, booking hotels, and so on, so the band just has to play. I was a manager, recording engineer, and producer all-in-one so it was a little different. With the Saucers and Toxic Reasons we were all family and everybody got an equal share. My main job was mixing and producing and I only wore the manager title when someone wanted to contact the band or to talk with the promoter and collect our money. I didn't book many shows; we left that to our label Risky.

MRR: Besides dead, where are a lot of the Fab Mab folks and people you knew in punk now?
Quite a few are long gone unfortunately, but many of us still survive. Just go on Facebook and check the Mabuhay Gardens page! Many are still in the Bay Area and some are as far away as Belgium and the UK—Billy Hawk from the Offs is living in Thailand!


TERRY (RIGHT) W/ J.J. OF TOXIC REASONS

MRR: What's your connection to Subterranean Records?
I knew Steve Tupper from back in the day. Again, he was one of the first indie labels putting out bands from the Bay Area. He put out a double 7" called *SF Underground* that had the Lewd on it as one of the bands. When I did the Lewd, there weren't many indie distributors that I could get to sell my records except Get Hip in Pittsburgh, Bomp in LA, and Steve with Subterranean. He liked the LP so much that he decided to do a second pressing of the LP. He wanted to co-release it with me and it worked out perfectly because the Lewd wanted to release three studio tracks from his *SF Underground* session that their label Chuckie Boy didn't want to release.

MRR: Tell us about your Vampir label.
I started Vampir in order to put out some of my live recordings since it was hard finding labels who wanted to put out 30-year-old live recordings. In addition, I did it as an attempt to document the San Francisco underground scene circa '79 to '81 because this was the true beginning of the punk movement and there will *never* be anything like it again.

MRR: Why release the Lewd and the Offs so many years later?
Because I wanted to document the scene and expose the future generations to this amazing time. It's live direct to two-track reel-to-reel and it's the way it happened. It captures the raw energy and excitement of the original punk movement. My recordings aren't perfect by any means, but they capture the moment. This way someone in their twenties can listen to my live shows and it's almost as if they are transported to a different time that can and will never be equaled again.

MRR: Having all those live shows uploaded to YouTube on your vampirrecs channel is a real gift to all punkers who were there and those who weren't even born yet. Thanks for putting in all those hours then and now! Do you have any plans for more releases on Vampir Records?
No, I don't have plans for any more releases. It's too hard to find distributors and with YouTube and the internet, nobody wants to buy the "old school" punk recordings. There are my two releases on Vampir and then White Noise has released my Young Canadians at the Mab called *Joyride on the Western Front*. My Avengers Old Waldorf show is available on a couple of Avengers LPs and a CD that came out a couple of years ago. Lydia Lunch and 8-Eyed Spy have released some of my tracks on the ROIR cassette called *Live*. Rave Up released the Saucers and Allies LP called *East Bay Punks from the Streets of Berkeley*.

MRR: What's your record collection like?
Amazing. I have about everything of importance up to 1982, don't care for much after that. What I don't have, I can download from the internet.

MRR: Do you feel like your involvement in punk was worth it?
Yes, I do. It was exciting being the first radio DJ to play four hours of punk music and it was exciting to be the one to record and broadcast all of the great punk bands at the time.

MRR: Do you think that the early days of Bay Area punk is forgotten? You seemed surprised I got in touch with you or that MRR was still going.
I wouldn't say it's forgotten or you wouldn't have contacted me, but I am surprised that someone from *MRR* waited over 30 years to contact me since I did give them the Lewd LP and Offs CD to review back around 2001.

MRR: Well hopefully now more people will be contacting you about this time because it's important to document further and expose more punks to your live recordings. I'm grateful I got an interview with you and thank you for your time. What are you up to these days?
These days I'm a typical grumpy old man and retired doing nothing.

MRR: Any last words, Terry?
It's too bad that I learned that all of the live tapes that I left with KALX have mysteriously disappeared.

youtube.com/user/vampirrecs

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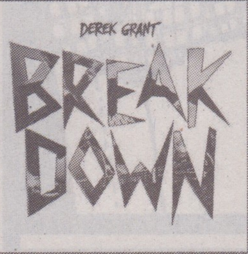

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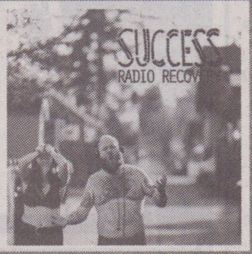

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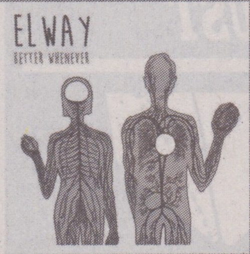

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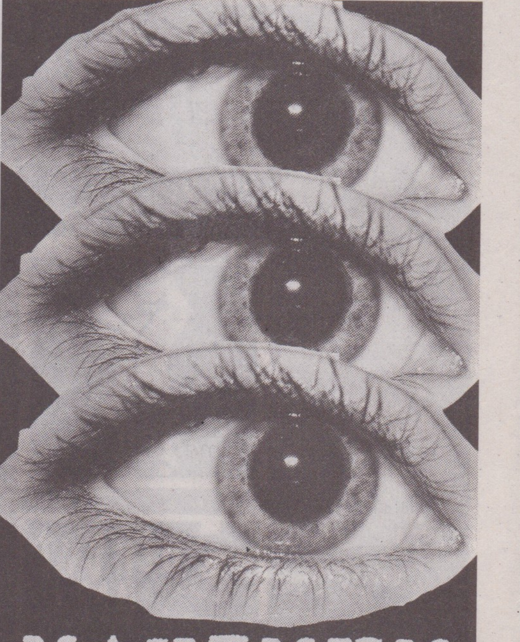

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GUTTER

at Prapopoulou squat

at Katarameno Syndromo

Gutter are from Athens, Greece. Featuring members of Antimob, Lifewreck and Sarabante, they slam out angst-ridden, no-frills hardcore influenced by a society falling to its knees. Interview by Keskin. Translation by Jay Bay Rigas. Photos provided by the band.

MRR: Let's start with the basics. Who are you? What do you do in the band? When did you all start playing together?

Stathis: I do vocals. We started in the spring of 2011, if I'm not mistaken, and we initially practiced in the space at Villa Amalias until it was evicted. A few of us were seriously involved in the squat at the time.

Manos: I play guitar. I knew the other guys beforehand, and joined the band while they were writing the demo. I had heard them practicing and liked them a lot, so one day I pulled them aside and asked if there was room for a second guitar. They were immediately supportive of the idea, and I really appreciated that.

Vaggelis: I play drums and once in a while do backing vocals.

Elias: I play bass now that Yiannis left the band. I used to play guitar.

MRR: You're no spring chickens. Let's find out just how old you are and what other bands you play in. It's not common for bands to share members in Athens, so how did Gutter come together despite your advanced years?

Stathis: Advanced years? Sorry but you must have forgotten how old Vaggelis is! Compared to him you're an old geezer yourself! Ha ha! The rest of them are still young, emphasis on *them*, got it? Okay, laugh all you want!

The band started after I pitched the idea to Elias and Vaggelis.This was at the Villa Amalias café, during one of the then-legendary Punk Thursdays (you know)! The guys were into it—I'll never forget the smile on Elias's face! It was tough for Vaggelis though because he played in three other bands at the time. He's a true "dog of war" though! He was stoked and he made it work!

As far as our reasons for starting the band, we are all huge fans of the '80s USHC sound. I had always dreamt of doing a band like this. You can count the number of Greek bands playing this style on one hand, and I never understood why. We didn't set out to be a rip-off band, though. We wanted to put something out that was uniquely our own but also informed by our undeniable USHC influences.

As far as bands sharing members, at one point this was exceptionally rare in the Athens scene. But now it's very common and is almost the norm. This is just as much the case in our band. I sing in Antimob, who are about to celebrate our ten-year anniversary.

Manos: I'm in my thirties now. I don't think there's an age limit when it comes to feeling the need to create something and express yourself. Your years won't stop you. This is something that flows out from deep within and it's hard to suppress.

I play guitar in Sarabante as well. It's true that, recently, a lot of newer bands in Athens have been sharing members. This is a phenomenon that was more common in bands from northern Greece. I think that it just so happens to be that way now. Look, we all know each other in some capacity, so if you share beliefs and musical tastes with someone it's easy to work together on something.

Vaggelis: I'm 26, the youngest member of all my bands so far. By Greek standards, I'm probably on the young side. In recent years there have been a lot of bands with members in common. I personally started playing in multiple bands early, because I enjoy working with different people on different musical projects. Of course I try to not prioritize one band over the other.

Elias: I'm 32 and play guitar in Lifewreck (fast hardcore / powerviolence).

MRR: Please tell the world about your releases. Who put them out? Are you planning anything new?

Vaggelis: We self-released a Demo CD-R in 2012. In 2013 we put out a split with Dirty Wombs with help from Screaming Victims

Records, Scarecrow Records, and No Sanctuary Records (Poland). And last year we self-released a seven-inch EP. At the moment we're writing new material, probably for a new seven-inch to be released this year.

MRR: A twelve-inch vinyl record split between two Greek punk bands? I can't remember anything like that ever being released, to be honest. How do you guys feel about this format? What is your relationship like with Dirty Wombs from Patras? Are you really into the Japcore thing or are you all just friends?

Stathis: There was a split LP released about seven or eight years ago by two bands from the north, if you recall. We're probably the second crew to attempt this. Ha ha!

We've been friends with Dirty Wombs for a long time and we loved collaborating with them on this split release. And it goes without saying that we're into Japcore! Without a doubt!

MRR: I heard the tracks from both sides of the split were recorded by Gutter! Do the members of this band truly possess such talents? Is each one of you skilled in this craft?

Manos: It's true that we've recorded all of our releases ourselves, with our own equipment and in no small part thanks to the essential know-how of Elias, who was in charge of the recordings. He and Yiorgos run Ignite Studios in Athens, where the seven-inch and split were recorded.

Elias: We always do our own recordings. For no reason other than that we want to expand our knowledge of the process. And because, no matter what the situation, doing it yourself is just better. We own, borrow, and occasionally rent equipment. The demo was recorded at the Sound and Word Collective, an autonomous band-run studio that since its inception has helped a lot of bands practice, record, and play live, with the help of a backline. Mastering took place at home, and we used whatever equipment and knowledge we already had. I help out at Ignite too. I hope that at some point we can live off of this studio so I can quit my day job, which is assembling computers and buttons at a shitty company filled with yuppies. "I wanna build a bomb and destroy this fucking place," as the song says.

MRR: DIY production! But three different labels put out the split LP. How did this come about? What are the pros and cons of split-releasing a record? Do you prefer doing it like this rather than self-releasing or working with bigger labels?

Stathis: The good thing about self-releasing is that you have complete control over distribution and over the number of copies pressed. When other labels intervene, this level of autonomy is impossible. I believe that the decision to work with multiple labels is influenced by two factors. A) You might not have the financial capability to support a release on your own, or B) you might just want to collaborate with people you like and trust. With the split LP, both factors came into play. Obviously I prefer to self-release, since you mentioned it. And we managed to do it with our self-titled seven-inch.

MRR: How important are live performances to the band? When do you all think that it's appropriate for a band to take the stage?

Stathis: A lot goes in to the decision to start playing live. As far as I'm concerned, a band should perform after they've really worked on their material, when they're tight enough that both the members of the band and the audience "get it." It's also good to have a release out by the time you start playing shows. A demo ideally, or at least some songs posted online. For me, there's no point in playing live when your band doesn't have anything for people to listen to. As a musician, you express yourself through your lyrics and your music, not just through your live performance. And if you're just doing the latter then, I'm sorry, you're irrelevant. Unfortunately, I've seen this happen a lot in Athens. That's when I start wondering who really cares about this thing and who's just doing it for shits and giggles and ephemeral self-promotion. But this has always happened and always will, I'm afraid.

MRR: On the stage or on the floor? Soundchecks or not even? Indoor shows or outdoor? Full PA with a sound person and all the fixins, or just plug in and turn the amps to eleven and see what happens? What's the sound quality like at Athens shows versus other places you've played?

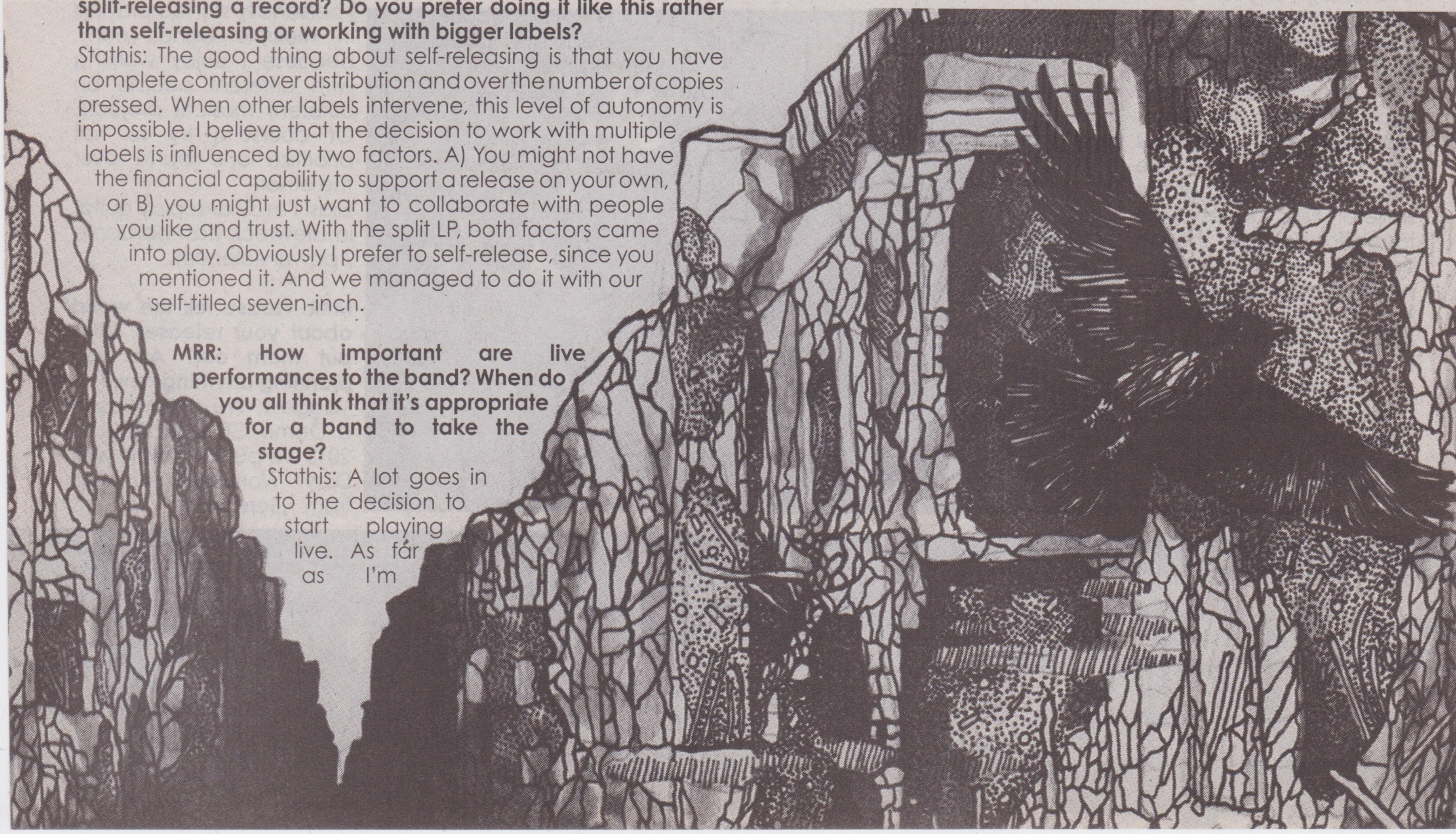
Stathis: Obviously I prefer being indoors and on the floor. This creates a sense of intimacy and urgency that you can't easily find elsewhere. The stage of course has its practical function, allowing you to see and be seen. But the downside is that it creates a distance between the band and the crowd.

Most of the time the sound quality at DIY shows in Athens is not good.

I would say that the set-up is pretty sketchy most of the time. I think that at some point this aspect of the show needs to be taken seriously.

Manos: I also prefer indoor spaces and obviously being on the floor, since you have the crowd next to you and you can really feel the energy of the space, whereas on a stage there is a certain feeling of coldness. But we're not one of those bands that can't function without a person running the sound. Of course a sound person guarantees a better end result for the show, but it's the responsibility of every band to play well and know how to set up their equipment, rather than wait for a sound miracle!

Now as far as shows are concerned, most of them aren't well-equipped for good sound. I think it's a matter of organization.



I can't understand why some people book shows but don't make arrangements for the sound! It's not just for the bands, it's also for the people who show up to listen to your music, who end up being disappointed with the sound quality.
Vaggelis: Of course I prefer indoor spaces, but with a good backline and a PA that can handle any unforseen complications. At this point I think it's essential for me to soundcheck so that I'm familiar with the set-up and the way we'll sound when I start playing. When everything's taken care of I can just enjoy the performance, whereas a while back I just did whatever.

MRR: What's the best show you've ever played? What are the show-spaces in Athens that you like playing? Do you play in other cities? Is there a network or friends who help book shows in other Greek cities and can also provide you with accommodation?
Stathis: I can't really say which show was the best. Each one had its own character and its own memories. But I can say that my personal favorite show was with Gay Anniversary and Hard Skin at the Prapopoulou Squat in Deecember 2014. The vibe at that show will never be replicated! I hadn't felt that way at a show in years.

We've played in other Greek cities, and now it's time for us to start thinking about playing abroad. For the time being, in Athens and in the rest of Greece there are fewer autonomous spaces that set up or host shows, largely because of evictions and increasing pressure from the state, as most of these spaces were squats.

The same thing is happening with booking collectives, to some extent. There are fewer and fewer groups booking and setting up shows and the ones that still exist have lost a lot of momentum. And all of this is taking place during an explosion of new bands. It's a total shame, and at some point new groups will have to open up new spaces. If not, the situation will be pretty bleak.
Vaggelis: That Hard Skin show had a vibe that reminded me of what we lived through years ago in places that no longer exist.

MRR: Villa Amalias. There are quite a few links between the band and the "Big House," the squat in downtown Athens that hosted more punk shows than any other space in the city, for over 20 years. What remained of all that?

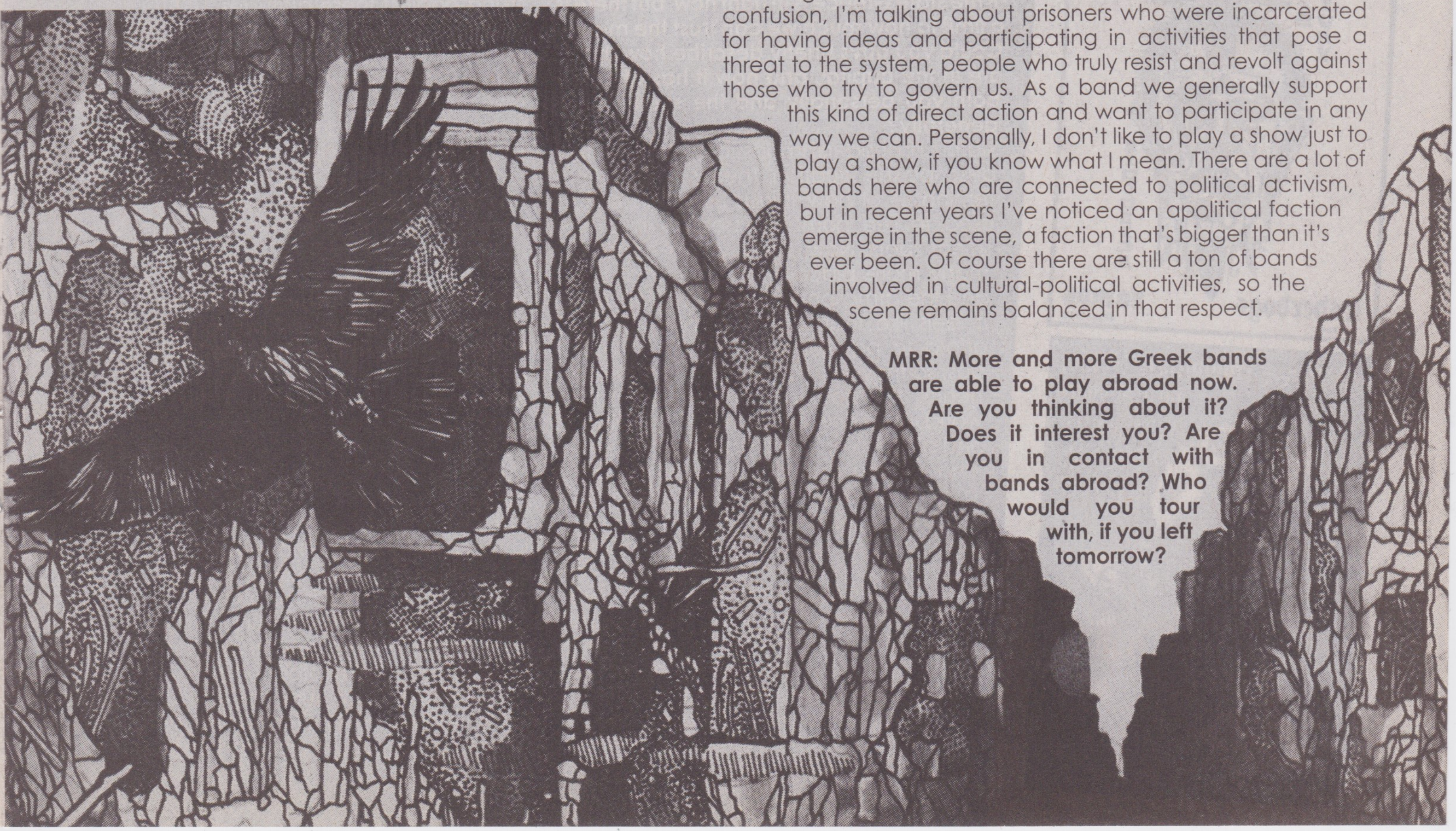
Stathis: The Villa gave us a lot. Culturally and politically. The squat means a lot of things to a lot of people. And this became obvious during the nation-wide solidarity movement following its eviction. There was a lot of direct action at that time, culminating in a 10,000-strong march in Athens, in January of 2013. Plus, there were solidarity demonstrations all over the world. How could it have been any different anyway? There were countless bands and people from all over who had been hosted by or who lived at the house during those two decades.

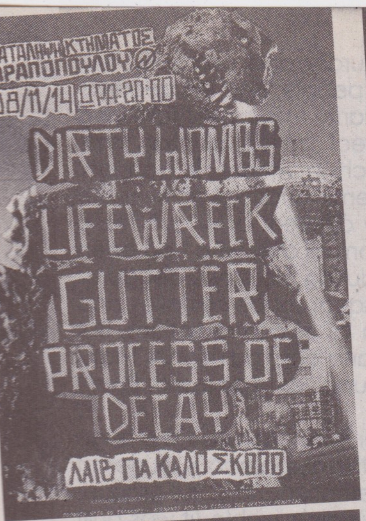
Of course, during its existence the squat made mistakes and was forced to come to terms with a lot of contradictions. But who hasn't been prone to mistakes and contradictions? That's what we learn from, so we owe it to ourselves to deal with them, to try and overcome them.

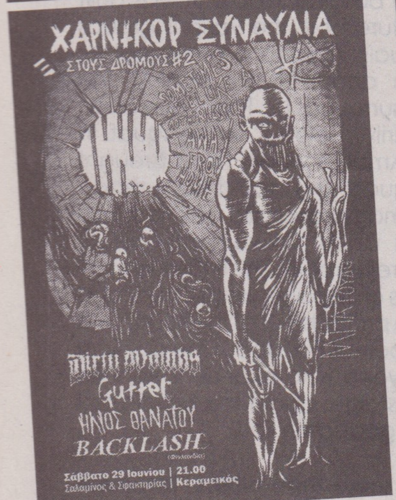
The "Big House" left a huge void after its eviction. It was a huge loss for the anarchist movement and the autonomous music/art scene. It was a political, cultural, and emotional loss. The amount of work that went into making the building livable (it was built in 1860) and organizing the structure of it, the various groups and events that the building actually housed is immesurable. These structures were subversive and actively against the current, dominant status quo that surrounds us. They were open to everyone, and did not necessarily "belong" to the squat. In a perfect world, the loss of Villa Amalias would have brought about the creation of two new squats! This would have made state officials lose their shit! But as many have said before, ideas are eviction-proof. We're talking about movements, about relationships built on solidarity and reciprocity. This is the essence of what takes place within the walls of a space like the Villa, and the goal is to ultimately move these projects out of the squat and into the world at large. The whole point is not about the physical structure. On the other hand, anyone who experienced Villa Amalias and claims to not feel nostalgia about the building at Acharnon and Heyden streets is a goddamn liar!

MRR: In some parts of the world more than others, the punk scene is affiliated with political movements. We see bands supporting activism by performing at benefit shows or by puting out benefit releases and compilations. Gutter recently played a benefit show, right?
Stathis: In October 2013 we played a benefit for political prisoners at a large square in Brahami, Athens. And just so there is no confusion, I'm talking about prisoners who were incarcerated for having ideas and participating in activities that pose a threat to the system, people who truly resist and revolt against those who try to govern us. As a band we generally support this kind of direct action and want to participate in any way we can. Personally, I don't like to play a show just to play a show, if you know what I mean. There are a lot of bands here who are connected to political activism, but in recent years I've noticed an apolitical faction emerge in the scene, a faction that's bigger than it's ever been. Of course there are still a ton of bands involved in cultural-political activities, so the scene remains balanced in that respect.

MRR: More and more Greek bands are able to play abroad now. Are you thinking about it? Does it interest you? Are you in contact with bands abroad? Who would you tour with, if you left tomorrow?







Vaggelis: It's true that Greek bands have been touring abroad more frequently now than in the past, and obviously we're interested. We've been talking to bands from other countries who have played here in Greece, and been in contact with venues abroad that have hosted Greek bands. As far as touring with another band is concerned, we'd be into it of course, but we'd have to get along with the members rather than just like their music.

Elias: Of course we're interested, but due to the reality of daily life (responsibilites at work, financial problems, and time constraints) we haven't managed to organize anything. We have a plan though! And we keep in touch with people in other countries, since each of us has toured abroad with other bands.

MRR: The rise of the Athenian punk scene! (And of other Greek scenes!) Fact or fiction? Is there really a strong scene or have a few releases just caught the attention of people abroad? What is the relationship between Gutter and other Athenian and Greek bands?

Stathis: As I mentioned above somewhere, the number of bands in Athens has increased, unlike in other cities, where I believe the scene has stagnated, unfortunately. We maintain friendly relationships with bands that we share common goals with. But I wouldn't say that we're very much in contact with bands from other cities. This didn't happen on purpose, though. I just think that, as opposed to how it was in the past, each city is isolated, having built "walls" around itself. A lot of bridges between different scenes have burned down, and it's a shame. I don't think this is just my opinion alone, and I hope that the status quo changes.

MRR: The whole world (more or less) is aware of the state Greece is in right now, but there is a limit to how much we can trust the media. Could you guys briefly describe how things are in the capital, and how it has affected both you personally and the scene more generally?

Stathis: I consider it impossible to accurately describe the situation. There's not much to remind us of how things used to be. You used to see homeless people in a few select spots. Now, sadly, you see them in many more places. You go out at night and the atmosphere is so smog-filled that it feels like tear gas. Most people can't afford to pay for heating oil or natural gas, so they turn to wood-burning stoves, hence the poor air quality. Looking for work based on meritocracy is like trying to find a needle in a haystack, and the only chance you have is to find something via a connection or through a friend and hope for the best. Even if you have a job, the money you make is almost nothing and there's no way you can survive on your own. Wages and pensions are way down. Strikes and labor movements are under attack and few workers have managed to avoid enemy fire. Healthcare? You just pray that nothing will happen to you, since either you can't cover the medical bills or there are no available health care options to support you in a time of need. And, as you may know, hospitals are shutting down in droves. The well-known, idiotic, fascist ex-Minister of Health Adonis Georgiadis was given this task, and executed it to perfection! Plus, it's obviously a "crime" to speak out in this fascist-leaning country that regularly deploys its goons to preserve order.

Now that SYRIZA has risen to power, we're waiting to see what is going to happen. But I don't have any illusion or faith that they will effect any kind of revolution. It's just a bourgeois party in line with the capitalist power structures.

In the midst of this downfall, that I only just *began* to describe, the number of punk bands has increased. I can't say whether the socio-political factors brought this about, but I'm sure that a lot of people find solace in music and want to express their rage through it. And it's the same for me. Music has always been one of many platforms for me to express my thoughts and voice my beliefs.

MRR: In the culture and lexicon of contemporary Greece, racist and homophobic language is the norm. Do you encounter such phenomena in punk circles and at the shows you play? Is it something that concerns you? Are there active immigrant or LGBTQ individuals in the scene?

Stathis: Racism is ingrained in the collective Greek consciousness. This society we live and breathe in, taking in the good (wondering how many are left) and the bad. Whether consciously or not, we fight some of these negative aspects and adopt certain others, dragging them with us wherever we go. So it's not surprising that we encounter certain negative behaviors and opinions in the scene. However, it is extremely rare to encounter racism; the Anti-fascist sentiment is very strong, so racism and far-right leanings are just not tolerated. But homophobia and machismo are not unheard of. Of course there are many of us who undoubtedly stand against these attitudes. LGBTQ involvement is becoming more and more common in recent years, but there is still a lot of progress left to be made. Participation from immigrants is very visible now too. There are a bunch of kids (first-generation Greeks whose parents came from the former Eastern Bloc) participating in the scene.

Elias: The scene is guilty of its share of racism, and it has its snobs, and it excludes people. Sadly there is still much ground to cover. I hope that we will find our way eventually.

MRR: What about the lyrics? Who writes them, and why are they in English? Do you guys think about the immediate impact that the lyrics have on your listeners?

Manos: Vaggelis and Stathis write the lyrics. As for why they're in English, I have no idea. If I remember correctly, I did suggest writing a song in Greek, but got no response from the rest of the band. We might try again in the future.

For me, it's important for the lyrics to have an immediate impact. That's what sets punk apart from other types of music. It's all about the raw outburst, the in-your-face attack!

Stathis: Look, Greek lyrics are immediate on every level and in this respect there is an advantage to singing in our native tongue here. But I also think that the Greek language is difficult and doesn't work well with every type of music. I don't think that our band could accommodate Greek lyrics.

At the same time, in Antimob we decided to abandon English years ago and sing exclusively in Greek. It worked out for the best. We made the right choice. Basically, it depends on the situation.

And for the record, let me remind Manos that Elias was totally against the idea of Greek lyrics, and that's why we never tried it out!

MRR: Imagine, Stathi, that you find yourself onstage coughing up a lung, having just performed the song "Stalin Youth." Then imagine that at that very moment Tim Yo (the half-Greek co-founder of *MRR*) appears before you as a zombie and asks you about that song. What explanation would you give him?

Stathis: I doubt that Tim Yo would like the song. "Stalin Youth" refers to the Communist Party's (KKE) Youth in Greece (KNE). In October of 2011, on a national day of strikes, the KNE joined forces with the PAME syndicalists (workers union affiliated to KKE) and formed a circle around Parliament in order to protect the seat of the government from the anarchists and other opponenents of the political system. The clash that ensued was pretty rough, if you recall. This wasn't the first time that the Communist Party gave its full support to the state. This particular episode, among other atrocities of theirs from the past, was the inspiration for the song.

For those who call Stalin "little-fathər" and play it unaware: Stalin was one of the worst dictators in history, even though he claimed to have brought true socialism to the USSR. And it's largely his fault that communism became a dirty insult! He and his cronies, who still exist, are enemies of liberty and radicalism. They are proponents of totalitarianism who have no connection to any kind of revolutionary culture, as much as they claim to be the opposite. And just to put a stop to this debate: Stalinism is not the same thing as communism. End of story!

MRR: What have you all been listening to lately? What Greek bands would you recommend?

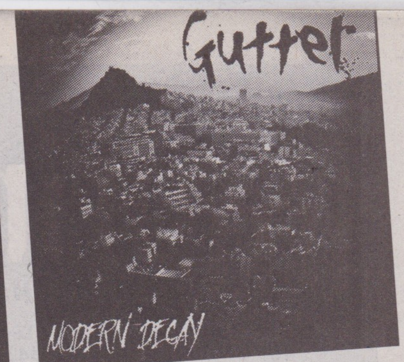
Stathis: Recently I've been getting into a lot of English and French Oi! And when I take a break from that, I get some good doses of '80s hardcore punk from Germany, Norway, and the USA. Apart from the old stuff, I listen to a random bunch of new hardcore bands, as well as good post-punk and new wave. I've heard a lot of great stuff recently and I'm in over my head. Ha ha!

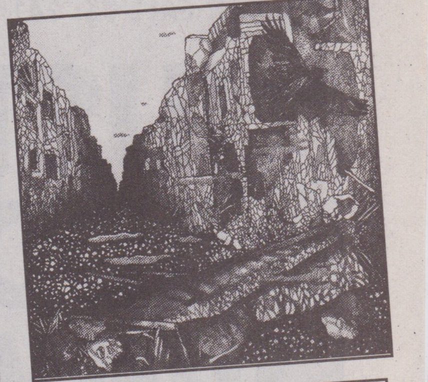
As far as Greek bands to check out, hmmm. This is pretty subjective, so I'll recommend new bands that I like: Gay Anniversary, Pandemia (RIP), and Chernobyl Attack. All these bands have material up on bandcamp, where anyone can listen and get a feel of them.

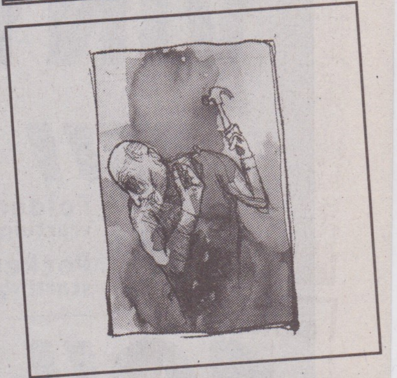
MRR: If you want to transmit a message to the eyes and ears of punks worldwide reading this, what would it be? (A less cliche way of asking for "any last words").

Stathis: Since you've given me this opportunity (ha ha!) I want to say the following, which is directly related to what we do as a band more or less: I always thought of punk as a community that dreams about, fights for, and promotes something different. And we have to keep it that way, free from cliques and self-promotion. We have to remember that it's a rallying cry meant to awaken the dormant, and to keep in mind its inherent spontaneity and anger. It's a type of anger that might not be able to change the whole world, but it changed me and many others who encountered it and became part of it. So let's go out from the gutter!

Vaggelis: We do what we do to make a change for the better, to change our lives and the lives of those around us, and to build the foundation for a better tomorrow. And music is part of this foundation. Keep fighting the good fight.







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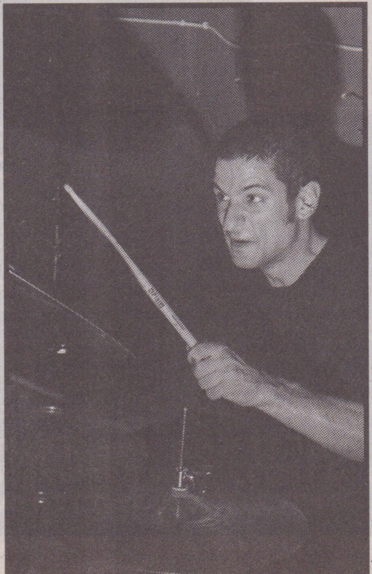

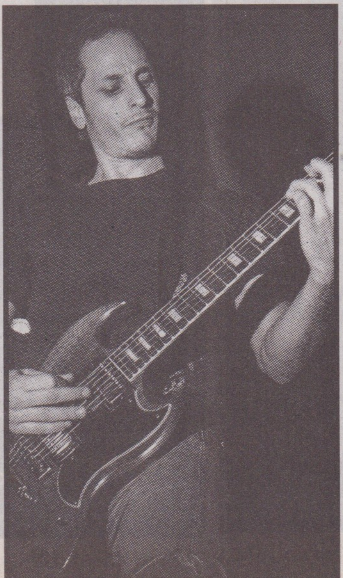

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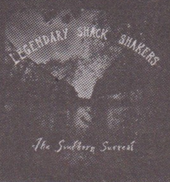

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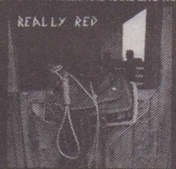

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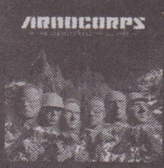

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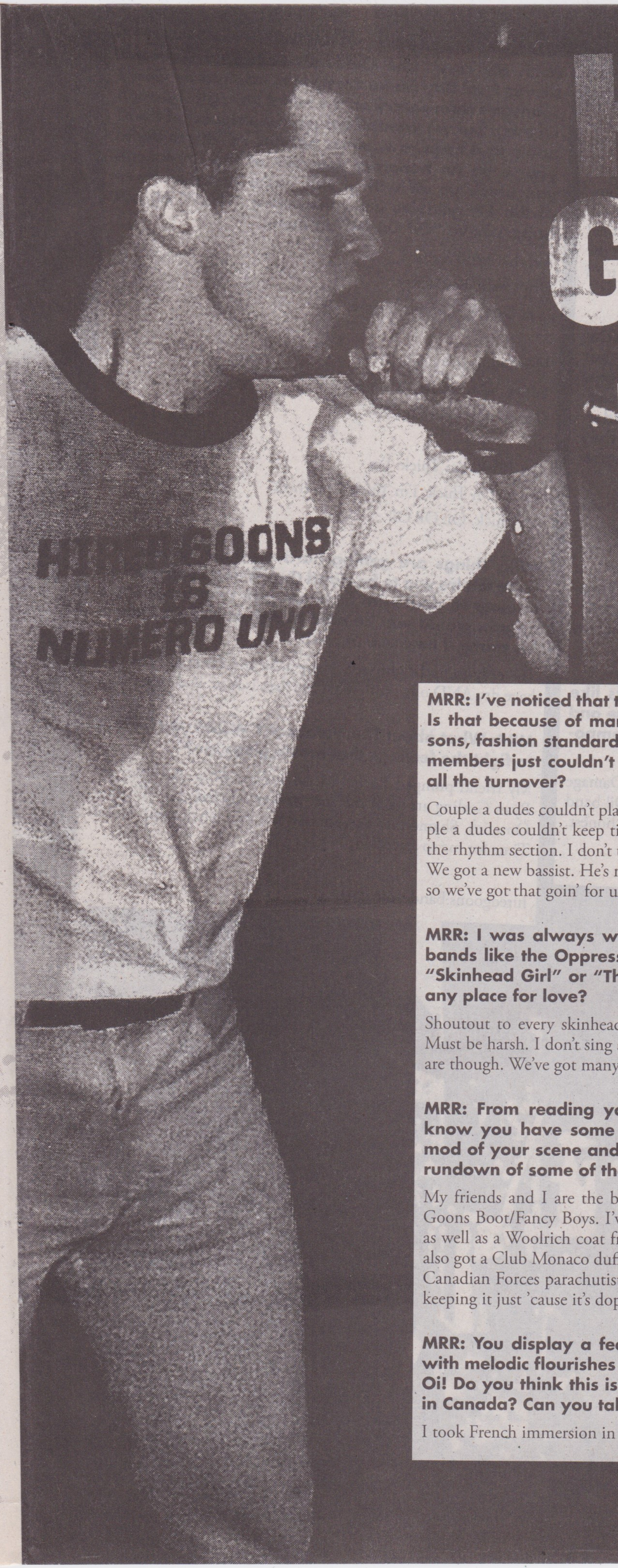
HIRED GOONS



Since its inception via Cockney Rejects and Gary Bushell, critics from Joe Carducci to Richard Meltzer agree there have been several distinct eras of Oi! music. Up until that Rixe EP just dropped, our current era (shout out to the spirit of '69, tho), labeled by musical sociologists as the "post-Criminal Damage" period, had been completely dominated by the likes of the Hired Goons' Demo #2 (on both cassette and vinyl). With gruff but not overwrought vocals that are evocative of their Canadian forbearers Bootprint and guitar leads that at times have the same sinewy quality as Greg Sage, but with perhaps a little more brawn, the Hired Goons are the best thing going in North America since Criminal Damage and rule, ok! Introduction and interview by Onan the Barbarian. Photos courtesy of Youth & Rust.

MRR: I've noticed that the band has gone through a lot of members. Is that because of mandatory participation in weekly Karate lessons, fashion standards, and football viewership that some former members just couldn't keep up with? If not, can you tell us about all the turnover?

Couple a dudes couldn't play the many, many shows we have lined up, and a couple a dudes couldn't keep time...a very important thing if you're like, you know, the rhythm section. I don't think any of us like sports, we just like Pumping Iron. We got a new bassist. He's not very well dressed but he looks really good shirtless so we've got that goin' for us.

MRR: I was always way into the tough apolitical romanticism of bands like the Oppressed or the Skinflicks who rocked songs like "Skinhead Girl" or "The Pride Of Our Scene." Do you think Oi! is any place for love?

Shoutout to every skinhead girl that has to tolerate catcalls singing that song. Must be harsh. I don't sing about romance because it ain't worth my time...pants are though. We've got many a song about pants.

MRR: From reading your interview in *Neutral Accents* fanzine I know you have some sick clothing. Are you the ace face or top mod of your scene and if not who is? Can you break us off with a rundown of some of the illest pieces of your wardrobe?

My friends and I are the best dressed, hands down, no doubt about it. Hired Goons Boot/Fancy Boys. I've got a Pendleton tweed overcoat from the late '60s as well as a Woolrich coat from the early '60s, both in very good condition. I've also got a Club Monaco duffel coat in camel, thrifted all these thangs. There's this Canadian Forces parachutist anorak I've got too, but it doesn't fit anymore...still keeping it just 'cause it's dope. We are excellent thrifters.

MRR: You display a fearlessness in counterbalancing your power with melodic flourishes that have led some people to invoke French Oi! Do you think this is because there is a large French population in Canada? Can you talk about your songwriting process?

I took French immersion in grade school. Dropped out in the third grade 'casue,

y'know, everyone speaks English anyway, and if they don't, they probably don't want to talk to me. Shoutout to all the people that send us messages in broken English, from Russia with love and all that.

I write a riff, Sam throws riffs at me until we can both agree on one, I say how I'd like the structure to be, he suggests things, we throw a lead on it later on. The first demo's leads were made up on the spot after Sam thought the final songs sounded a bit dull. I come up with lyrics and hopefully they fit to the song...it's been hard to find things to write about though; every time I try I realize that I don't actually care.

MRR: One of the most underrated and underappreciated skinheads was/is Sinead O'Connor. The piece in *Nuts* about her song "Black Boys On Mopeds" making the people cry contains *so much* truth. Now maybe that the '90s are back in style people will critically reexamine her works. Are there any underrated skinheads/Oi! Bands that never got the recognition they deserve that come to your mind that you'd like to put the spotlight on?

Nah. If anything, too many Oi! bands get recognition. This genre is rife with the most generic, uninteresting bands. Supporting the scene is cool and people should do that, but supporting terrible bands ain't my bag. People can play in shitty bands all they want, but maybe if we stop paying attention they'll go back to the drawing board and maybe write something worth listening to. The only genre worse for quality control is that powerviolence shit... at least Oi! bands don't waste our precious resources by pressing dollar bin records. Nothing Compares 2 that garbage. "Fight The Real Enemy."

MRR: There is a pretty hot contemporary oi scene, bands like y'all, the Flex, and Vanity, and whenever Criminal Damage and Hard Skin drop stuff it's pretty hot. Who are your contemporaries and what do you think of them?

The demo for the Vanity LP was better than the actual LP. Criminal Damage are better than us. We're better than everyone else. Best Canadian Oi! band ever? Top five at least. That's not even being cocky, that's just being honest. Can you even name five Canadian oi bands?

MRR: My crew, (the Oakland, California Diamond District Boot Boy Haiku Crew) was inspired by Garry Johnson's slam poetry on the initial *Strength Through Oi* comp but we wanted our poetry stripped of floral pomp and hella raw...enter haikus. I'd like to invite you to be an honorary member of the Crew...can you break us off with a sick haiku in which three of the 17 syllables are consecutive "Oi!s?" All our haiku's have "Oi! Oi! Oi!" in them.

Another band formed
Drips with mediocrity
"Oi! Oi! Oi!" Cringe. Shame.

Hired Goons, ya cunt
Songs 'bout clothes & suicide
Our sound? "Oi! Oi! Oi!"

I'm Thick. I'm Thick. I'm
Thick. I'm Thick. I'm Thick. I'm Thick.
I'm Thick. Oi! Oi! Oi!

MRR: Things are getting hard on these streets. If I were to hire you to be Hired Goons and keep y'all on retainer to deal with hard geezers who want some aggro...would you be able to defeat like Ric Flair in his prime if he came at me?

The only thing I fight with is my acne and eczema. How do I have dry AND oily skin? What the fuck is that? Bad-skin-heads.

MRR: What about *The Notebook*? Would you be able to fight the feelings that movie gives me?

My friend pumped Rachel McAdams' gas once. Both her and Ryan Gosling are from the area we were/are based in (London, Ontario). Shame that real-life fairytale of a relationship ended. Time for me to swoop in.

hiredgoons.bandcamp.com

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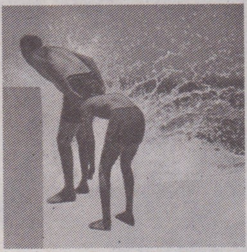

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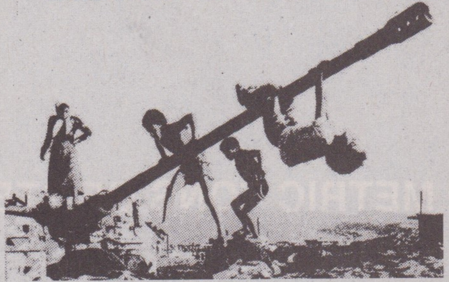

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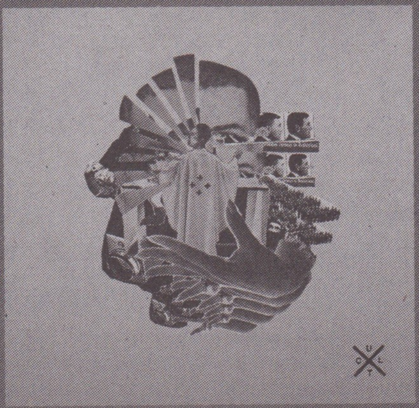

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Atlantide Squat
Bologna, Italy

The members of Permanent Ruin are spread up and down the West Coast of the United States, but they're a San Jose band at heart. They spent three or so weeks on tour in Europe this spring. Here's an *edited portion of drummer Rich Gutierrez's reports from the road. *An unabridged version of this tour diary appears on MRR's website.
Photos courtesy of Giulia Mazza, the band and Fidel Gutierrez . Unabridged version edited by Leslie Patron.

Jason // bass · Fred // guitar · Mariam // vocals · Rich // drums ··· Road Dogs DiDi & Dano

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Tuesday, April 21: SFO to Bologna, Italy

The flight was long! 13 hours and a straight shot from SFO to Istanbul, Turkey before popping over to Milan, Italy. We landed at midnight their time and headed down to gather our luggage. When we got there, we could not find the guitars and after some wandering and staring and confused looks and even more confusing language-locked convos we found out they were lost! This is like what you always think about, but doesn't happen. They said they might show up in time before our first show, but they don't know, what the fuck?

We eventually met up with Febo and his partner Laura, who would drive us the three hours to Bologna. Febo was a sweet tall man with long hair dressed in all black. He had a few rings and reminds me of the bad guy from The Crow; he smoked about a whole pack of cigarettes from the moment we met till when we finally got to Bologna where we crashed in the Agipunk basement HQ. It is huge and sorta confusing because it's like an apartment complex and Mila who runs Agipunk gets this basketball-court-sized basement to store equipment and records and silkscreen gear! Febo told us not to shit in the toilet, taught us how to say "go fuck yourself" in Italian just in case, and headed to bed.

Thursday, April 23: Bologna, Italy

Febo woke us up and made us all some espresso and we chatted about rent prices: a problem for all us turds worldwide. We tried the airport again and still no guitars! We are just kinda like, "I dunno." The less we care the better it'll turn out?

Febo told us where pizza was and we headed out for a walk. We stared at some buildings ate some gelato and some olives and cheese and sat at a coffee shop, talking shit and drinking espresso, felt like some real chill laidback motherfuckers.

Friday, April 24: Bologna, Italy

We woke up super late again. We were up all night talking and are still not used to the time difference. We discovered our guitars never left SFO with us! Such bullshit, but they are sending them.

We got to the gig. It was at a cool squat called Atlantid. We helped set up and sat around and then they brought out some massive pots of food! Fred and I were like, if they continue to feed us like this we will be eating healthier than we do at home! We ate and the other band and people ate on the steps. Merm and I starting trying yoga poses and the whole gig exploded! Everyone was out front doing headstands and trying not to fall while holding all these poses. It was pretty awesome, people were laughing and cheering a bunch.

The show itself was such a great first show. We played last, so the band had to pace themselves with all the free drinks. It is almost expected that the headlining touring band backlines the gig which is how it should be I think—well, at least the backlining part. The touring band

backlining is weird because what if the other bands bust the shit up and we gotta head to the next city with a broken floor tom and take the hit moneywise? It's not our equipment so I felt weird being like "sure!" but it worked out well. The first bands played and were some heavy jammy stuff, it wasn't my cup o'tea, but the second of the two were nearer to my cup of tea and were tight as hell—they were called Mo'e, pronounced moi. They are supposed to come to the Bay in September. The funniest thing was that the first band took themselves really seriously and the power would go out every two-three songs. I loved it.

I asked someone at the show who had toured the US before what they thought about it because it's all house shows and no one really cares for the most part. He said, "It's fucking weird but I love it so much." It made me feel good because for years I thought that it must be a bummer for international bands. I always tried to overcompensate with chilaquiles or tacos and a nice spot to sleep.

We played and we pummeled through fifteen songs if I do say so myself! People were doing some ignorant ass push moshing like it was '98 Ozzfest and I was feeling it. The crowd chanted to play more because we played twenty minutes shorter than every other band so we gave them a taste of two more and there was a fight. I felt like I was back in San Jose. We had a great time. After the set some boy from Sweden bought Merm a beer and asked, I shit you not, "How long have you been lifting?" Then someone said, "Your vocals sound like Melt Banana mixed with Infest." Much better than what we got once: "Hardcore with Nausea chick vocals."

Saturday, April 25: Bologna, Italy and Montecchio, Italy

We finally are leaving Bologna. We hugged Febo and took off. We got about two blocks before we needed his help because we couldn't map out the address in our GPS. Febo to the rescue again! He came out smiling as we apologized and he said, "I'm happy to see you."

On the road we stopped at the first rest stop and I looked through about fifty snack bars looking for anything without dairy. It's fun learning all the different ways to say milk in anything but English. There was a coffee shop, but these shops don't really give to-go cups, you drink your espresso in lil' ceramic cups and head back out. It's amazing to me how moderated their waste is! There is guilt ingrained in me living in the States because of the amazing amount of waste that is normalized in our culture. If you choose to be somewhat sustainable you are alienated like some freaky Whole Foods dork (which is real) but it's true that I just feel pressure living/being alive. It's a fucked up feeling but I don't feel that here. There is a quiet calm surrounding the apparent sustainability here, because it's not something you have to think about, it's just how it is. I like that.

We had to drive ourselves until Germany where we would pick up our driver Didi. After securing our van for tour we realized that only Jason can drive stick shift, so we had to scramble to find a driver last minute. It's probably for the best, we barely know what we are doing anyway. We do work well under panic.

We got to the gig around 6:15p,. The other band playing that night was Rage from the Deep—they came up and started chatting our ears off. They were funny and had so much energy and looked as though they hadn't been crushed by time's heavy hand yet. They had Pantera shirts and tightass pants on—I could see their bulges fairly easily. We all set up the equipment because we were all sharing and then the place just started relentlessly bringing out plates of bruschetta with olives and oil and little pizzas made with this flat bread which I guess is very popular in this region. It looked like something similar to a Lunchables pizza but tasted like heaven—the boys in the other band asked if it was true that in America pizza is made with ketchup! I was grinding down all these foods and then realized it wasn't the main course! Then they brought out big plates of pasta! What the fuck!

Everyone wobbled around for a bit and then all these metalhead Ozzfest hessians and women with Dark Throne t-shirts started arriving—metal culture is real as fuck out here. I felt like I was in Oakland going to some butt punk pirate Juggalo gig but I actually appreciate these people—they are nice and so pumped on anything fast!

The show finally started at 11pm. A major gripe for me is that the shows start so late and the bands play forever! We finally played at 12:45 and sped through our set in fifteen minutes with a one-song encore because people were mosh chanting. After we played, we got all these weird close-talking hugs from metal guys, which I would usually be pissed off, but here it seems so much sweeter, like it's much more normalized and less creepy to be affectionate, people kiss and hug and touch a lot. It's funny the little things people do like that and I connect it to a larger picture about living spaces and the co-op culture in Europe as opposed to culture in the states, which is another plague on our existence, the constant isolating force to be "independent." It really separates us from simple things, like greetings. There are like twenty different ways to greet and say goodbye here and everyone loves to greet and say goodbye.

Before we left some guy stumbled over to me and Merm, he put his arms around us both bringing us in close like we were old pals about to snap a class photo or some shit and said, "You drum good." Then he turned to Merm and said, "You sing great, you have it all: the boobs and the balls." I paused to see Merm's reaction and she fucking lost it laughing and then so did I because, well, what the fuck? He got really

BARCELONA

embarassed and apologized because he was so drunk and didn't know how to say what he meant, but I think we both picked up what he was puttin' down.

The promoter Enrico's house had two bedrooms full of beds made for each of us! I was in awe. Such a chill dude and he hooked us up with the comfiest sleeping quarters! I went to the bathroom and next to the toilet was another bidet.

Up until now I had never used a bidet. My first experience: I pooped. I wasn't sure if you're supposed to wipe and then bidet or just dive right into the butt waterfall, so I wiped and then turned the knobs all the way up on the seat. I always thought the water shot straight up into your donut hole, but this one just sadly flowed out with a light amount of water pressure, slightly pointed up but mostly to the side. I really hope that I didn't get a bunk one because that would make this more embarrassing. I lightly hovered above then eventually rested my thighs on the porcelain

and had to pat the water against my b-hole. I didn't think it was cleaning so I started to, like, rub my butthole and then eventually just put my finger in my butt because I decided I'm already here I might as well rinse out and clean shop, right? But I mean this can't be right because there is no way people get poop hand when using a bidet, right!? It just splashes and you're done? This seemed too involved. I rubbed some soap in it and turned the water off. I wiped again and just kinda stared at it with my pants off. For the record I also took my shirt off because I didn't know how wild these things got so, in conclusion I just basically wiped my butt with my hand completely naked. I washed my hands thoroughly and decided I would never use a bidet again. I'm sorry.

I ate a chocolate bar and fell asleep on my baller-ass cot.

MERM AND RICH HANDSTAND ACROSS EUROPE FOOL

Sunday. April 26: Montecchio, Italy

We left Enrico's just in time to meet his lovely grandmother who offered us caffe and biscuits, but we had to cut out. She was so sweet and reminded me of my grandma, I thought for sure she would be bummed seeing a group of punk trash rats, but she had thee biggest smile and was so, so proud of her grandson. He had to translate for us that we couldn't stay, and Merm jumped to the front and told him to tell her that he's a sweet young man. When she said it the little old lady squeezed him like a pillow—I thought she was going to pick him up over her head she was so excited! There were gunshots everywhere because I guess it's hunting season and Montecchio is out in the cuts, twas very spooky.

We showed up to the gig at 2:00pm, as we were told to with three exclamation points so we figured we needed to be there that early. At first it seemed cool, it was in a squat underneath some apartments. Illaria (she said it's like Hillary) told me it used to be a furniture store. It looked like a massive white stucco cave sprinkled with bad graffiti and your usual bright street art stuff, like cops and repeated snakey/wormy creatures and the occasional ACAB (sorry, I'm a hater at heart). It went downhill from there on out. I tried my best to just have a positive outlook, but fuuuuck let me tell you it was real rough. It's safe to say it's not a good idea to have bands show up at 2:00pm when they play at 10:30pm (maybe). There was a scribbled set order on the door which was confusing to everyone playing or maybe just us—it was like twelve or thirteen bands. We just played the waiting game and they all played for like 45 minutes each, it was kind of like being in a really crappy bar. The whole place was filled with cigarette smoke, so thick that if you took a hard breath out you'd see your path clear the fog for a second and drunk people would just appear in the space between. They were everywhere, just splashing beers around and creating the perfect scenario for my worst nightmare (hater, I know, just being honest).

We got to talk to a few cool folks throughout the night, but it's really hard when you are so tired and confused. We talked about the punk culture here, mostly to this kid Mike who is half Chinese and Filipino. Most of his band the Seeker is Filipino. He told us about how rampant racism is in Italy and Europe explaining his experiences as a person of color (the show was still mostly white here). He was telling me to be careful because I am the darkest one in the band, but I already knew, I've always known. I understand the threats might be different there—I've was getting hard stares everywhere we went, but it was honestly mostly because I looked dirty and had my head up my ass. I'm just trying to put on the blinders and enjoy myself. He also just talked a lot about how punk is more focused on a community effort and some acts of selflessness, which is so rare where we are from. Where we are you have to depend on yourself and it's hard to go out on a ledge because you will be alienated. The punk scene in the States seems to be more focused on riffs than culture. I have to say I am a fan of the riff, but also hate cool.

We received our guitars from one of Febo's friends who picked them up from the airport and brought them to us! We finally played at like 11:00pm! They stuck us at the end. I couldn't tell if this was normal but if fucking sucked because a lot of people had left. I would have never put touring bands that far at the end of a longass show! It's pretty rude. I think the local big draws should take that spot, but also I know nothing about how things work here and really we are nobodies, definitely not famous, just your normal butthurt American rock band. As I was bringing my snare up several people came up to me and said, "Are you playing now?" When I said yes they let out a big "thank god!" which showed me that 1) Maybe this wasn't normal and we got hosed and 2) Up until now I had no idea if anyone knew who we were or wanted to see us, so that made me feel good.

Clocked Out from Scotland played before us. They were awesome and were just saying the same shit we had been saying all day about every band playing forever. We were in our sad confused zone with everything—I wish we met them sooner, we could have been hanging all day! Totally goofy ass Scottish dudes, they played and were raging thrashcore with nonstop and an unrelenting intensity. All that waiting must've made these pasty freaks amped as hell. The drummer asked the crowd for weed in like 20 different ways, I think he might have been addicted to marijuana.

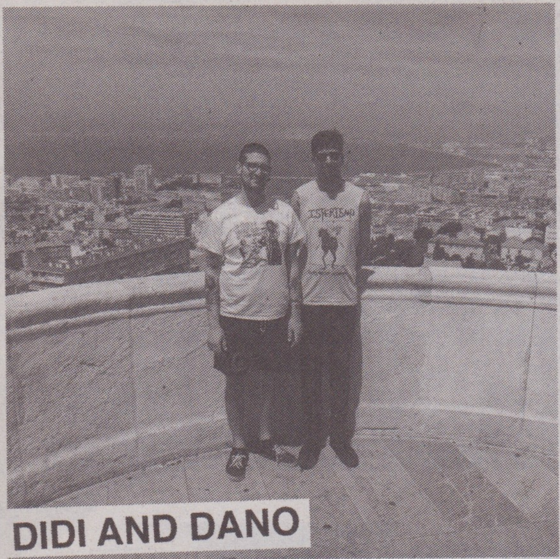
I saw some interesting Italian mosh moves during the day. One was the shoe mic, where they took off a shoe and pretended to sing into it and put the shoe in the crowd like a singalong! Another was the rowboat where a group would sit on the ground crotch to butt and pretend to row a boat together. They were also obsessed with picking people up (I later learned that this was true in most of Europe) which was funny to watch, but also sort of frightening because the ground was drenched with beer and possibly a shit and piss combo meal, because the only restroom was in the show space and it had started overflowing at 4:00pm. I expected way more casualties, death by Italian caca cocktail.

After all that we were unsure where we were staying, but luckily a friend from San Francisco, Hanna, showed up wasted and pumped! She offered us some space on the floor of her Airbnb in exchange for our rock music and a ride. She was telling us she barely dodged being attacked on the street and ran into a store where she saw some punks and said she was in danger and was trying to find the Permanent Ruin show—she got an Italian punk escort! I'm happy she was safe. I am surprised she convinced her Airbnb hosts to let us all stay without an extra charge. Some people have wild drunk survival skills! I can barely order a smoothie correctly sober! We got to her place and after some confusing parking situations and Hanna insisting on us eating fries, I crashed on the couch, wi-fi in hand till my eyes were too heavy.

Monday, April 27: Milano, Italy to München, Germany

We left the pad at around 7:30am. I was awoken by a trifecta of odd sounds: Hanna's whispering, Fred's alarm and Mariam's fart that could be best described as catastrophic. We tried to find a grocery store, but just got angry driving around packed-ass Milano where driving lanes don't exist.

It was a six hour trek to München where we would pick up our driver Didi so we wanted to rush out, no time for tourist junk. We didn't



DIDI AND DANO

realize we had to cross through Switzerland. I guess you need a Vignette sticker to cross into there which we didn't have. In Switzerland they will also search your van and tax you on all merchandise! We scrambled and panicked about what to do. Reroute? Stop and text? Call someone? Question risking it? After doing all of those things we decided to go through and play dumb and maybe have to buy a Vignette. We got to the border with sweaty palms. A patrol officer flagged us in and every Canadian border debacle played out in my mind. I was ready to sit in a room and be questioned about a million things I didn't know and feel two feet tall. She said something which none of us understood, to which we responded "Uhhhhh, englisse Americano." Her eyes rolled a little and she said "bye" and that was the extent of our border trouble, what a joke! Luck of the annoying American I guess? Hooray, we are more trouble than it's worth! Munich-bound, baby!

I suggest this drive to anyone cutting through to Germany. It is breathtakingly beautiful! Huge mountains, greeny greens, old castlelike structures weathered and standing on one leg. The fog sits low and heavy at certain points and goats trample around like you are in a Ricola commercial. We popped on some sad music. Waterfalls just peek through mountainsides on every windy turn and the views of small towns from miles up were unmatched.

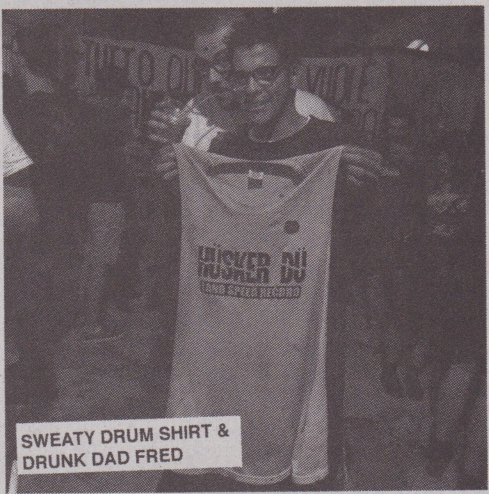
München, Germany is so cool. The venue, Kafe Kult, is in this weird place that looks like it was at one time like army barracks or sleeping quarters and each separate building was repurposed to have its own business or art space. We showed up and Robert greeted us and showed us around, while Jason and Merm left to go pick up Didi from the bus station. We got fed a big ass bowl of chili and bread that was already prepared in this communal kitchen space in the center of the venue. I ate several bowls and drank a few weird sodas. They are always trying to keep you properly bevved up in Europe. Whether you drink beer or not, they always want you drinking, it's tight. He showed us where we were sleeping, in an awesome room with five queen beds butted up against each other. It looked like one of those trampoline places. He showed us the "backstage," which was filled top to bottom with bands' graffiti from the last fifteen or so years! Some of my faves were DS-13, ETA, Holier Than Thou, Blank Stare, Ohuzaru, and soooo many more. We made it, baby!

Someone was coming back in the morning to cook us breakfast which is just mind-blowing to me. I told them that I honestly did not know how to respond to such hospitality. I felt really awkward being treated so well. They said, "Oh good" and it made them laugh, but Germans laugh after everything they say so I couldn't tell if I was actually funny to them. I wasn't trying to be funny—I was dead serious! Fred and I chilled hard in the backstage area drinking soda and drawing in the guestbook.

Jason and Merm hadn't come back for a long time and Fred's phone was dead so we started joking that they were trying to contact him while they were sitting on the road somewhere with a flat, and then at that very moment Robert walked in and said they called him and they were stuck behind a demonstration! Freeeaaakkky! I guess there has been an uprising in the fascist community here and Munich is somewhat conservative compared to other places in Germany so it's even worse. Conservative groups claiming to not be fascists but accepting Nazis had been demonstrating every Monday and Antifa and others came out to counter their demonstrations. Cops came out every time, so it was apparently very sketchy at the moment. Jason and Mariam were stuck behind this mess searching for Didi.

Fred and I stayed in the back room for a while longer as a few people piled in and then everyone showed and we set up. The crowd was a bit sparse but it's a Monday and no one is famous here so I wasn't expecting much, I thought it was actually a good group. Robert said we should come on a weekend and it would be better, which most promoters say, but I had a blast. A ton of people came up after and were hanging, telling us where to go the next day and just chatting us up. It was really worth it—feeling at home at a gig that isn't in your hometown is huge! I might have also felt better because I drank more caffeine today then I had the whole trip. I met Didi finally and he was cool as fuck. We just sat around all night talking and I drank my first Club Mate and they were giving me a German bev tour. Didi made sure I tasted this malted non-alcoholic thing, I had to clarify I was straightedge because I thought they were fucking with me, but he assured me. It was such a heavy drink. It felt like I was drinking a loaf of bread and tasted like beer. I felt like one of the boys, tossin' back a couple of beers post gig. I cheers'd Merm several times.

I wish we had a place like this back home or that it was even a possibility to have a space like this one.



SWEATY DRUM SHIRT & DRUNK DAD FRED

Tuesday April 28th: München, Germany to Offenberg, Germany

We took a trip to the Dachau concentration camp and spent a few hours walking through the memorial. It was so much heavier than I was expecting. I don't want to delve too far into it, because it was a lot.

Being in that space and recognizing how many band names are taken from the Holocaust really grossed me out. The disconnect seems too real and it's disappointing. So many people play with Nazi/fascist imagery and it makes no goddamn sense!

The space was real and feeling the rocks crush under my feet and birds chirp and the beautiful scenery was such a mindfuck knowing that we as humans could truly take away that beauty from people. The space itself would have been lost if it weren't for survivors pushing to have it rebuilt as a memorial and preserve the atrocities. It wasn't even a memorial until 1965! That is so recent! After the fall of the NSP the people had no money, no family, no housing, absolutely nothing but their own mortality which was still being questioned. There was a rush to forget so they basically turned the camps into transitional housing for people who were already in them and just pretended that they were not work/death camps previously.

The gate in front of Dachau had the words "Work will set you free" emblazoned along the top, but the entire gate was stolen in 2014. The people who stole it were never found. Thinking about that in the context of the prior day's fascist demonstrations in the same town and the fact that some people were saying that fascist thought had been picking up in Germany made me so uneasy, because fascist demonstrations were how it began. It makes me imagine the gate is probably just hanging in some fascist group's clubhouse as a trophy.

It's hard to be into punk currently when it's such a trend to be some apolitical ding-dong, with the push of sketchy behavior and fetishizing Nazi/fascist imagery. If you have a Death in June shirt on and I ask you if you are white power don't fucking look at me like I'm the idiot! To you these problems seem worlds away, but they could become closer every day.

After we left, the van was quiet for about thirty minutes until we exploded into some lengthy, heavy processing conversations. We had a

three-hour drive to Offenberg where Didi lives so we let loose. I think some of my favorite parts of tours are the heavy conversations sparked by passing trees and the existential/introspective ideas that come from being cramped in a tin can barreling down unfamiliar roads. I absorb the most information in these moments and also I get to hash out my own constant internal dialogue, by letting it leak out and bouncing thoughts off others in this tiny space with me. These moments are the realest and are something "magic" or some other hippyesque feeling. It's one of the biggest payoffs for me because it brings you closer to people you both know and maybe barely know. It is the gluing of ourselves to one another and it is humanizing. It is also something that can't be weighed, the amount of emotion involved in touring, but it's all a building block, stacking you into something you weren't before.

Didi took us up these mountains and into a forest where we decided we were going to die. We tried to think of a title for the horror movie that we were filming in our heads, spouting out scenes that would happen and deciding who would die first and how. We hopped out of the van and were greeted by a gargantuan castle-like structure on top of this mountain overlooking towns that were now spots of white in the distance disguised under fog and towering trees. It was decaying and basically in ruins. Didi told us it was built in the second half of the 14th century! We all laughed because this thing was so fucking old and it really dates our American existence. Fred said he thought it was wild that his house was built 100 years ago! California built things only like 400 years ago and we already can't take care of them and here's this fucking bag of bones castle, which was once a monastery for monks and destroyed by a lightning strike and subsequent fire. This thing was built and destroyed before we even threw together our first bullshit ass mud-rock fire pit.

We drove to Didi's and grabbed some food to cook from the grocery store. He picked me up some soda from this venue he helps run which is like six doors from his house! It was like walking through some freaky Parisian horror movie where it's a long underground venue lined with bricks and markings like it was once used as a dungeon and at the end of the corridors there was a bar and little stage. He said it's been here for 40 years! Anyway, the important thing is the soda he got me, Spezi. It was cola, orange concentrate and lemonade and it was a game-changer. After we ate, we plopped down in Didi's room and he and Merm talked about German punk and played us a million records and gave us the lowdown on classic regional German punk bands and some stories about their members, it was a cool punk history lesson. It makes punk seem like something actually real and that people can be historians about stuff that shaped them.

We all talked shit and after a couple rounds of chuckles we passed out.

THE CRÜ

Wednesday April 29: Offenberg, Germany to Leipzig, Germany

We drove up to a castle on a hillside to eat breakfast. It was very beautiful. I started to have that undeserving feeling creep up finally during my second sandwich while leaned up against the bricks with a crow staring at me.

I left the States during one of the worst mental health months I've had in a while. I was surprised I was even able to make it to tour, I felt mentally and physically weak, exhausted beyond a controllable realm. I sat with death a few times in that month, which has happened before, but I was close to harming myself in a very mortal way. I'm happy I was able to make it out this time. Being out and participating in international hardcore is the only thing that's ever really made me feel real or worth anything. It has been the most constant driving force in my life since I first decided I might want to die. I'm trying my best to feel worthy of all this hospitality that everyone is giving, but it's hard for me. I am giving myself to the thought of resting my hatred for myself. It helps that I get to be around people I really care about and that they are in it with me, it is settling. My mom used to quote Susan Sarandon from that movie Bull Durham (I know, haha) when I was young. I didn't understand and it fits so much more now that I'm older and constantly reviewing my impact in every situation and feeling shameful for it: "The world is made for people who aren't cursed with self-awareness."

I slept for most of the six-hour trip from Offenberg to Leipzig. We showed up two hours late because of traffic, but people were just barely showing up. The area seemed pretty similar to everywhere else we've played: small streets which might have been condemned at some point but were now flats on top and show spaces on the bottom floor, peppered Antifa and ACAB tags up and down the block and every door. There was a hanging banner on the building kitty-corner to the show space for the squat, which I later found out was fake, because they were filming a TV show and they put up the banner to pretend the neighborhood was "one of those spots." I guess Leipzig is going to be the new Berlin. It was once a town no one cared for and now it's an increasingly gentrified area soon to be filled with cafes and overly idealistic people slummin' it till it's no longer cool or cheap. People were talking about it.

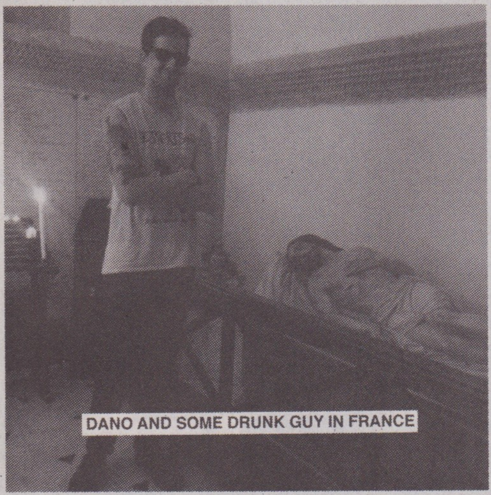
Our host Basti fed us some delicious potato salad (his grandma's secret recipe) and these falafel-like bean patties and they made sure we had every freaky soda they had to offer like rhubarb and some local mate drink. I love when they say vegan because they say "wegan."

The show piled in and was quickly packed. Drux played first. It was their first gig and they were straight ahead American-style hardcore, like Youngblood Records I'd say.

We set up and tested Jason's bass head because it has been acting wonky. When it turned on it shut off all the power in the venue, so we had to borrow a head and hoped we could get it fixed soon. I thought we played the best set of the tour so far—we got a couple people to crawl along the edge of humans, which is a big thing I think. It's hard to get folks to move around in some places especially for a band they don't know and on a weekday. I saw some promising head nods and we sold the most merch so far.

We headed directly above the venue to our super comfortable sleeping quarters. In the meantime Didi and Merm were having a tiff with German police. Apparently I tapped the car behind the van earlier and the lights started flashing which I just took as normal and thought it would go of eventually. I guess the owner came down and called the police. Apparently in Germany when those lights flash you are supposed to call someone? So they called it a hit and run! She was claiming we broke part of her bumper and we absolutely did not. They tried to intimidate Didi but he held his ground and they took down our info. Maybe we will get a ticket one day. Basti was going on about how he wanted to go downstairs and pop her tires or let the air out. Instead he wrote her license plate down so he could do it later if she moved her car. He is very intense. He said it would be hard for him to let it go.

We sat listening to his records and talking about punk for a long time and also talked about personal feelings about everything in-between and then we all slowly faded away. Right before bed we were all reading things about the rioting in Baltimore that started when we left after a young black man was killed in police custody. It's hard to just get blips of info every night when we get wi-fi before bed. It's an eerie feeling being around so many places that are staunchly anti-fascist/anti-racist and to hear about all this tragic racial inequality at home, makes my heart hurt.


DANO AND SOME DRUNK GUY IN FRANCE

BIG WEENER GUY STATUE IN BELGIUM

JASON TOUCHIN RIM IN GERMANY

Thursday, April 30: Berlin, Germany

We chowed on some bread and spread (a classic German breakfast) and took Jason's bass amp apart at the breakfast table. We just basically stared at it gutted until we realized we don't know anything and walked to a music store where they said they couldn't look at it. I bought a bass drum head and stole some random crap. I asked Didi what happens when you get caught stealing, he said you get cited, so I plan on stealing a lot because if I get caught I live in California and I ain't payin shiiiittt!

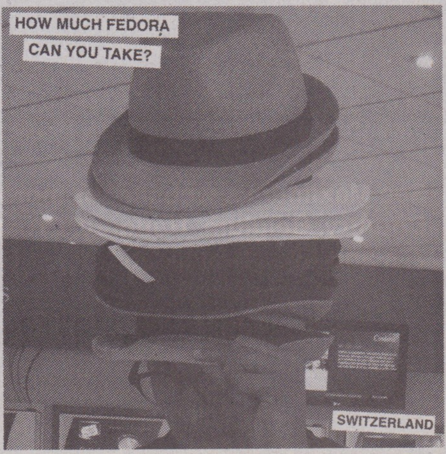
We drove through more beautiful landscapes while listening to Thin Lizzy. We got into Berlin the day before May Day which is huge here and has become a day of rioting, so the roads were littered with piggies. There were sprinter vans packed tightly with cops and several just driving around. Within five minutes of pulling we got pulled over by cops. I didn't know because I heard no sirens, but they pulled in front of us and flagged us down. Didi slammed it into park and said, "I hate Berlin." The cops said a bunch of stern bullshit and ticketed us for not having some kind of sticker in the window that allows you to drive in Berlin. We decided to just park the van at the venue and walk around after we dropped off Jason's bass amp (we ultimately found out shit was fucking fucked). It was a sketchy situation because the cops were everywhere. It was gross. I later learned that the reason for pre-May Day rioting is because the city now tries to make May Day some big family event so that people don't smash or riot as much. It seems to work and so many tourists walk around all dumbfuck happy that they can grub a currywürst and soak in the culture. As if.

We got to the venue, a gigantic building that spanned a whole city block. The gates at the entrance had a "No Photos" sign; we walked through and walked past a whole shantytown built by its occupants. The building itself was half squatted, half rented.

We keep getting varying information about every "squat" and how they started. One person said that sometimes a person will squat a space and then just have their rich parent buy the property, one person told us that this place was a squat and that it was once a shopping center in the 1800s which once again was mind-blowing to me because 1) I believe it and 2) how do you even fathom building everything they have here? Two venues, a full communal kitchen, a theater, a climbing wall, bike kitchen, housing and everything else you could think of and 3) how do you keep a building that old structurally sound while building all this bullshit on top of it and without proper funding? I guess the way most squats in Germany came to fruition (to my limited knowledge) is that when the GDP collapsed there were entire neighborhoods of empty structures without owners, not even city owned, just lonely islands in the center of oceans of concrete, so people could just occupy them and claim squatters' rights because no one actually owned it and even if a company would buy them, if they were occupied prior to the sale than they could not kick them out. I felt very confused and naive, I really want to unwrinkle this confusion, but I don't think I will. I also heard that squat culture is almost gone due to gentrification, because the city government has cracked down the last couple years with brute strength and in violent ways to which most people have responded by just saying they will take a deal and just pay a low amount of money—which is what the poseurs I suppose do because they just want to live in this "cool" space without the trouble. It's gross. It reminded me of people moving into poor neighborhoods in the States. They 'slum it' just so they can live in a popular space and they ultimately change the entire climate of said place.

Anyway this place Köpi was very famous and utterly fascinating regardless of its current squat or no squat status. We entered and met Robert who runs Refused records and who was booking the gig for us. He's a sweet dude who is straightedge and very proud. The label is mostly straightedge and intentional in the sense that most the bands are edge and politically aware. I really appreciate his existence in that sense as I am straightedge and am very proud of it, but I don't usually feel connected to most straightedge people or scenes. They are usually so devoid of substance (pun not intended) or focused on moshing, riffs, and clothes. We immediately had some long conversations about edge bands we both liked and bands he's released. I found out that I am actually on a record that he released! He released the seven-inch for this band No Mistake that I played in for a bit. He had a huge distro with him that really pumped me up! I talked about how growing up every show would have labels or distros set up with a ton of records and I discovered so many bands this way. It was a cool way to interact at shows other than being on your phones, just sifting through records and chatting about certain bands. It also was a lot easier to sell and trade records that way if you ran a label. Now it seems basically non-existent.

I met Jenni, Robert's partner, who also runs a label Emancy Punx which is also intentional in the sense that its releases are largely all womyn. Her distro was awesome and packed full of Bay bands and I commented on each one that had a friend in it. She said, "You all have a great scene" and I kinda giggled because maybe it seems that way from far away. It is great that in the Bay it would be weirder to see an all-male bill. Most bands have womyn in them, which isn't huge, but compared to other scenes it's gigantic. How cool it must be to be partners who both have awesome labels and distros!

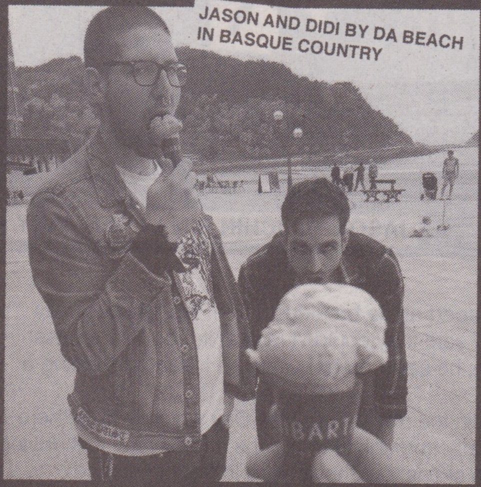

HOW MUCH FEDORA CAN YOU TAKE?

SWITZERLAND

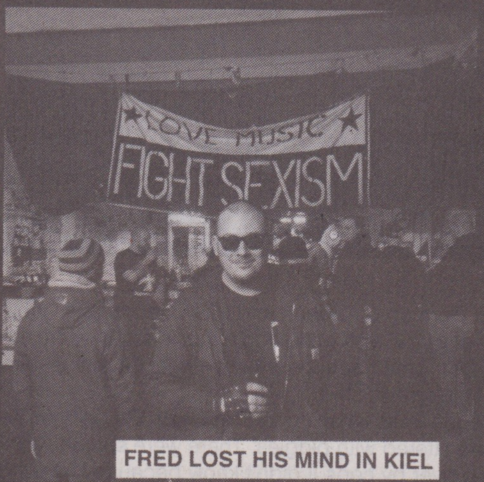
We set up our equipment in the basement that looked like it was once used as a dungeon. The walls were leaking from the rain fifteen feet above us and the place was already fogging up with cigarette smoke but I was on my fourth Club Mate cola, full of the wegan pizzas we were fed and floating on cloud nine about Robert and Jenni. I was feeling good as fuck.

The first band was a group of three queer women jammin' some simple slow doomy stuff. They were from Finland but now lived in Berlin, it was their second show and they brought us a bass head because ours was surely fucked. I was excited to finally play because it was fucking freezing and I was ready to rock because at this point (11:30pm) the place was snug with people and I was pumped. We played a solid set, but could not get one person to budge or even crawl a little bit. After we finished, like five people came up and told was we were amazing. It was so hard to gauge by all the stiff stares and crossed arms! I totally get it though, I was so happy nonetheless—moshing isn't everything. We sold a bunch of merch and drank sodas while chatting at high volume over very bad German acid rock techno.

Jenni told me that all the cops are so focused on protecting the people with money during these two days that they leave the refugee housing projects open and susceptible to attacks from racist fascist groups. It really bummed me out, but it's real and I tried not to think about it too much.



JASON AND DIDI BY DA BEACH IN BASQUE COUNTRY



FRED LOST HIS MIND IN KIEL

SPEZI BAY BAY!

Friday May 1: Berlin, Germany and Kassel, Germany

Jenni made us a big breakfast and I read a bunch of feminist literature she had laying around, some talking a lot about the intersection of color in feminism. Robert and I got on a tangent about new straightedge hardcore bands worldwide and I wrote down some of my current faves and gave him my contact info so we could chat more in the future. He offered to help or maybe actually release a Busted Outlook record (another band I play in) and he said he'd book our Euro tour if we wanted to come! Jason and I walked two miles to pick up his amp and then took the metro to meet everyone at the Core-Tex store where there was a free show outside for May Day. We got to the van and snuck out of town without any trouble from the cops, but I'm sure they were very busy with other stuff, thank god.

I woke up in Kassel as we were pulling up to the show. We hopped on this show last minute, because we were supposed to play in Gothenburg, Sweden right after Berlin, but it was going to be an eleven-hour trip and then a nine-hour trip the next day so we said fuck it and cancelled. The drive would have cost us a fortune and although I really wanted to visit Sweden, we wouldn't have been able to see much and probably would have been beat! I heard there is a six-hour long ferry you take, that sounded pretty cool. Luckily the show in Kassel was being co-run by an Internet friend of mine Annka who I had never met in person so I was excited I would get the chance to meet someone I only slightly know from world's apart. The food was great as per usual, a massive pot of seitan and some veggies, I made like three huge sloppy sandwiches and rolled myself over to fully meet Annka. They were so sweet and had made us a peanut butter and jelly pie.

We played in between four bands that sounded like emotive metal-ish/crust-ish bands. A band from Greece played called Ruined Families and they were probably the best out of all the bands. The singer went pretty nuts and it was funny because by the time they played we were all really tired and/or drunk so at one point he read our set list aloud on stage that we left and Merm was pretty wasted at this point and screamed "Top that motherfucker! I will fucking kill you!" in Greek. Somehow drunk Mariam could speak Greek, I don't really know how that happened. The crowd lightly snickered and the singer looked surprised and possibly scared.

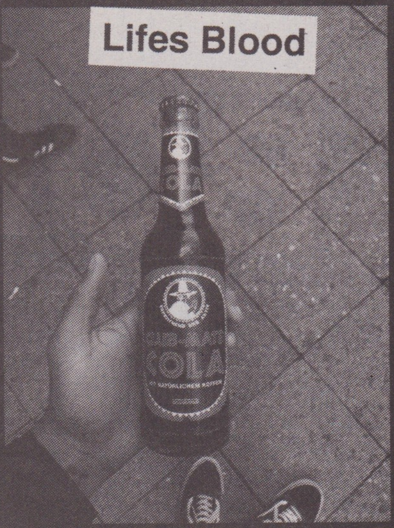
Later I couldn't sleep because Didi and Merm snored soo loudly, I was caught in stereo sound of what was like a muffled motorcycle engine, so I went out in the kitchen and ended up talking to Annka and slept in the room they slept in. We talked about current affairs in greater Europe and they filled me in on some things I was unaware of and we talked about where we grew up. It was nice to meet them and connect in a cool way, I felt uncharacteristically calm and comfortable. I passed out in a snore-free zone (thank god) and dreamt that I lived in a town that wasn't San Jose.

I had been thinking about leaving my hometown of San Jose a lot and this trip has kind of been a catalyst because I see there is so much more for me possibly elsewhere. Emotional ties can be great and that closeness is rare but also can tie you down and hold you back. That is a whole different conversation, but it's sad to think I may have nothing more to offer my town or the people I care for or vice versa. It was just a dream; maybe this whole thing is a dream.

See Maximum's website for more reflections on Permanent Ruin's tour, which continued to Spain, Basque Country, Belgium, Hungary, Croatia, France, and more. Agipunk just released an LP compiling their first three 7"s and five unreleased tracks. Get it at agipunk.com.

never too much food in Basque Country

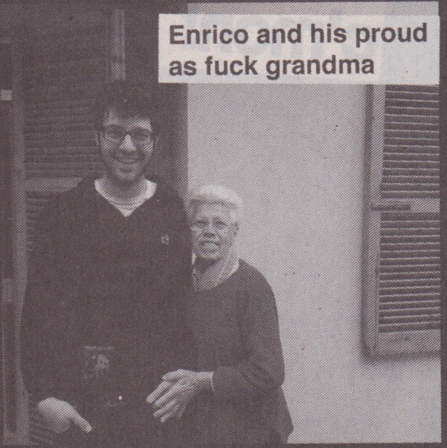
Clocked Out and Perm Ru Milano, Italy

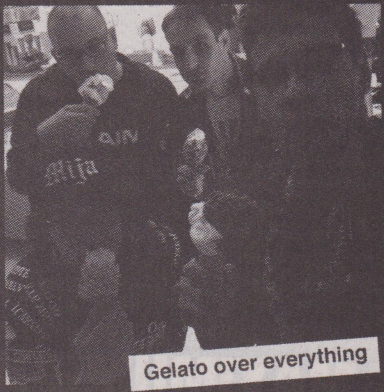

Lifes Blood

big mac in Budapest

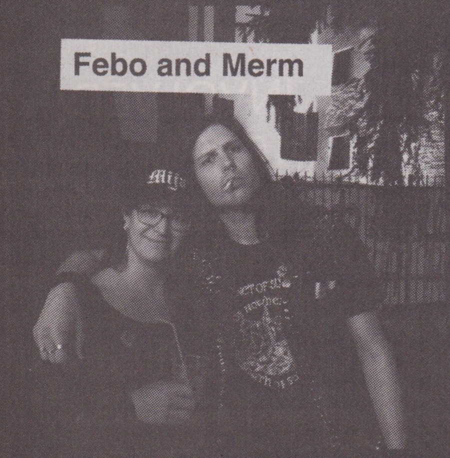
Robert and Jenni at their Flat in Berlin

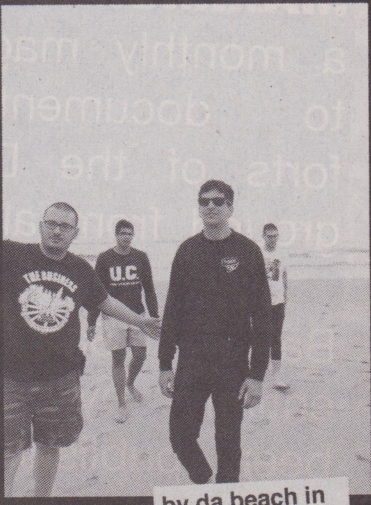
que pasa berlin


Enrico and his proud as fuck grandma

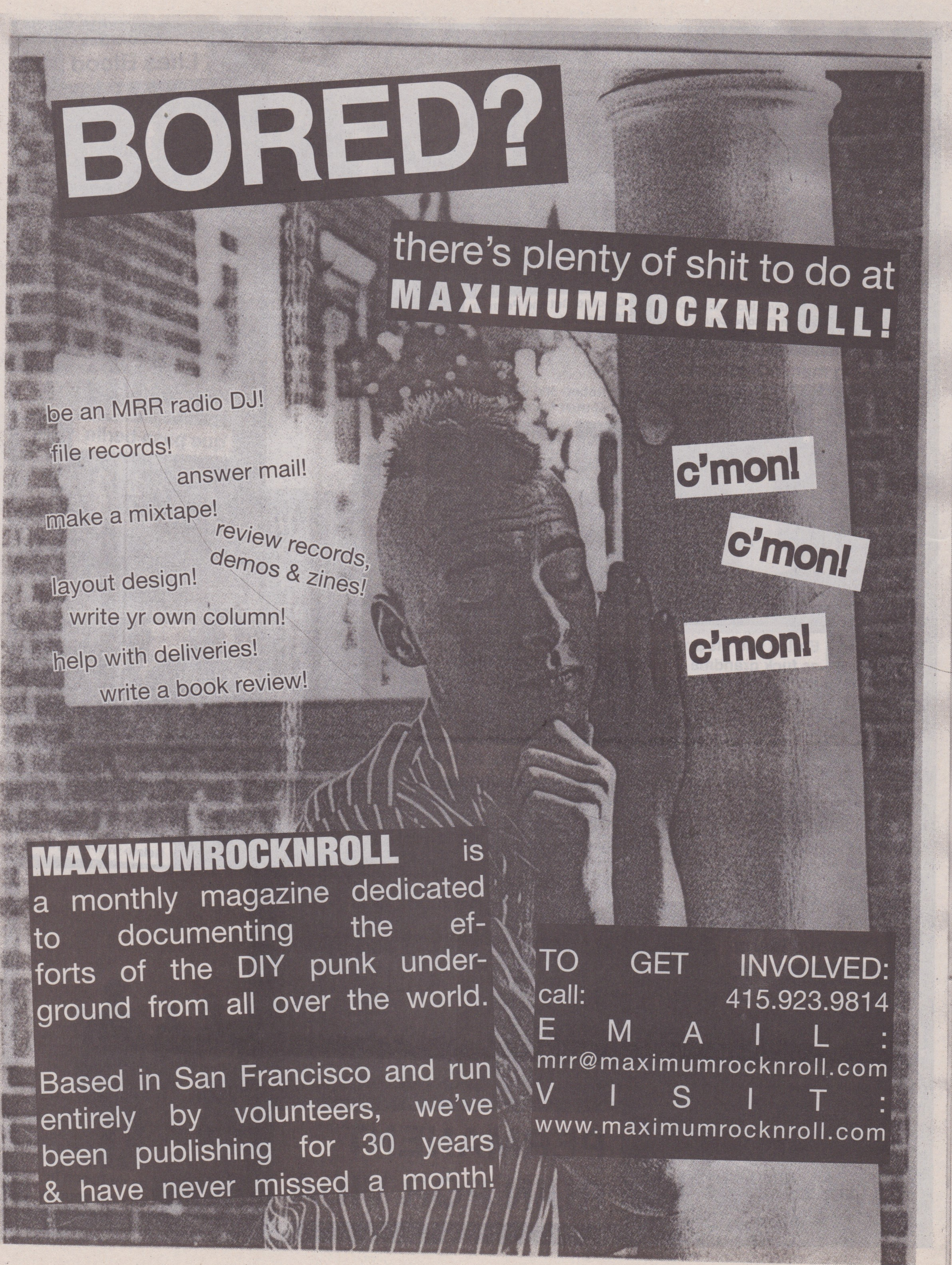

Gelato over everything

Montecchio, Italy


Febo and Merm


by da beach in basque country

PERMANENT RUIN POR VIDA



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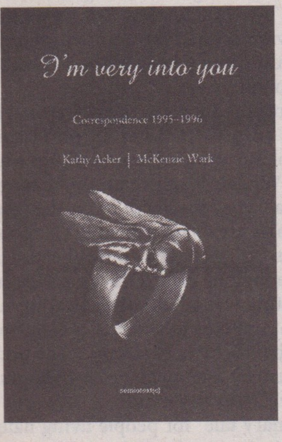


I'm Very Into You: Correspondence 1995-1996
Kathy Acker & McKenzie Wark
151 pages • $13.95
Semiotext(e)
semiotexte.com

A few years ago there was a Richard Hell reading at City Lights. Dick candidly addressed the crowd about fucking Kathy Acker in the ass. Hell, like many straight white men, is the survivor of a generation that we lost many greats to due to AIDS, cancer, drugs, or suicide. Those that survived are, sometimes regrettably, the only ones left to speak for the deceased. Realistically, Hell has little to contribute to any living conversation besides a list of dead women he fucked in the ass and thus his name becomes fitting. We are utterly tortured by this conquest of lost potential.

About a year ago, a group of people in the Bay Area poetry scene posted a call out of a group of men known to be abusive, rapists, and/or harassers. On this list was someone who calls himself Janey Smith. His name is a reference to the protagonist in what is possibly Kathy Acker's most well known novel, Blood and Guts in High School. It has been said that Janey took this name upon Acker's death. Rumored to have slept with the late author, he felt it was his to take. This book sits in this mixed company. I'm Very Into You is the collected correspondence of McKenzie Wark and Kathy Acker spanning an entire two weeks after a brief fling on a trip Acker made to Australia.

Who the fuck is McKenzie Wark? I was born in 1985 so I was twelve when Acker left this world. I was nine when Wark's Virtual Geography was released. What is this book about? I don't really know. What I do know is that McKenzie Wark doesn't get Beavis and Butthead.

If you are like me, you could be invested in carving out places in your imagination where you forge real and lasting intimacy with people by sharing your joys and struggles with the world. When infatuation smacks you, life is colored differently. You wonder how a beloved would interpret your world. And when emails interrogate these questions it feels strangely urgent, crazy, and magical.

Text on a screen is seen as fickle. Too easy to misinterpret. As though we are somehow better at talking out loud, or more inexplicably, as though if we wrote it down it would come off any better. Perhaps it is true in some ways that handwriting allows a tenderness or an empathy that the keyboard and text field does not. It seems impossible and potentially foolhardy to renounce the reality of the virtual world in 2015. Twenty years ago was it that different?

If you look at this book as a kind of combat or intellectual sparring it sometimes makes more sense. Who does a better job of referring to what they've read or how they live their life? One-liner for one-liner Kathy wins every time. While Ken does a better job at being aloof Kathy beats this out by being blunt but still retaining a tenderness. Perhaps my affinity for tough, mean, smart girls influences my perception of the victor but I feel as though almost anyone would read it as such. Ken brags more about sexual escapades but Kathy seems to have more real friends who come with fewer lovers and actually seems to live life in a way Ken can't. And sure, I'm projecting. I know I see myself here. It's easy to fathom; drunk and writing emails in the middle of the night.

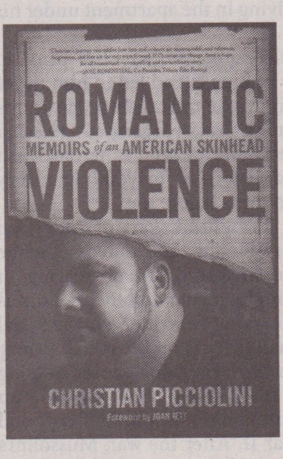
Acker and Wark quibble and freak on gender roles and their early postmodern disintegration. It's '90s San Francisco sexuality at its finest as they bark to one another about leather daddies, queerness, fisting, spanking, and more. But the truth comes out when Kathy is at her weakest, high on mushrooms and dreaming for more. She's lonely and her world is ending. She is stuck in her place stifled by untenured higher education positions with no benefits and wanting more. It's almost as if she knows she's at her end. Barely two years after the friendship starts Kathy dies in an alternative cancer treatment facility in Mexico.

Editor Chris Kraus introduced this project to the world via an article in The Believer last year. Her final words in the article underscore my feeling that we are meant to identify with Kathy in order to understand this text:

"We're all the same, don't you think?" the artist Martha Rosler remarked. We were talking about Acker, whom she'd known well in San Diego during the early 1970s. "Of course we're competitive. But that also means we can identify with her. I could've been Kathy; Kathy could've been me. I don't know. I could've been you; you could've been me. We all could've been Eleanor Antin. It's all the same. And by that I don't mean we're not who we are. But you know what I mean."

The drive to pull people towards you and the fears that make you push them away. That's just a constant bubbling force in all of us. Never ending. Adorno says, "False nearness inspires malice." It's possible that capital, distance, and fear all incubate a faked intimacy. Create worlds that none of us can actually live in. Marx, the economist, says "If you love without evoking love in return—that is, if your loving as loving does not produce reciprocal love; if through a living expression of yourself as a loving person you do not make yourself a beloved one, then your love is impotent—a misfortune." Klaus Theweleit, who makes a brief cameo in the emails says, "At any rate the women's usefulness for certain of their husband's production does not remain unconscious. The sexuality of these relationships is a production sexuality. There are forms of object-choice where production sexuality determines whether love will break out (and in all probability a mixture of mutually incompatible forms of sexuality decide its end)."

—E.Conner



Romantic Violence: Memoirs of an American Skinhead
Christian Picciolini
329 pgs • $16.00
Goldmill Group
christianpicciolini.com

Through the years, there have been a number of memoirs by reformed Nazi skinheads, but this is the first one I've examined closely. *Romantic Violence*, the name taken from a racist mailorder the author was involved with, purports to be a "cautionary tale." What set the stage for his longtime and deep involvement with the white power scene? In the introduction, the author identifies his "overwhelming desire to achieve prominence" and "profound, essential human need to belong." Frighteningly, he claims it's "disturbingly easy… for someone without prior inclination towards prejudice *or violence* (my emphasis) to enter a world of unadulterated hate." But the very next page—page one—starts the story of his empowerment through violence, which happens before he's ever made the Nazi salute.

As he tells it, Christian Picciolini was born in Chicago in 1973 to Italian immigrant parents, who live and work in the tightknit, heavily Italian Blue Island neighborhood in the South Side. After Christian's birth, they move to the nearby suburb of Oak Forest, where they live for the next fourteen years. Owing to his parents' heavy work schedule, he is mostly raised by his grandparents in the old neighborhood and returns to the suburbs at night. He attends school in Oak Forest, and feels alienated from the non-Italians there. But he doesn't interact with other kids in Blue Island, and so lacks a peer group of any sort. At school, he draws negative attention for his family's old-world ways, and is targeted by a bully. Chapter one is the story of him beating up the bully, which radically changes the other kids' perceptions of him. Now he's "the most dangerous kid at school," admired by all. "I took this lesson to heart." The same day, his parents tell him they're moving back to Blue Island.

Back in the old neighborhood, he gets a bike and meets some kids. An older guy he's known all his life turns him and his friends onto punk rock, and they're into Naked Raygun, the Effigies, etc. But the older guy also drives around the neighborhood cranking the racist British band Skrewdriver on his car stereo. Our narrator claims to fall in love with the music, while feeling no connection to the lyrics. One day, as Christian and his friend smoke a joint in an alley, a car pulls up, and out steps a purposeful, charismatic, sharply-dressed man. "With ninja-like speed" the stranger slaps the joint away, hectoring the kids

that Jews want them to be docile so Blacks can take what white people rightfully own. Christian becomes enthralled, as this is the first time a grownup has ever provided discipline with any type of rationale. The stranger also tells him Italians are white and gives him a flyer for his mailorder, Romantic Violence, with a post office box sole right there in Blue Island. (The author claims Romantic Violence was the sole American importer of Skrewdriver's material on the German Rock-O-Rama label, but I doubt this.)

Inspired by this encounter and subsequent discussions, Christian becomes a Nazi skinhead. Much of rest of the book is written using the vernacular, so there are many, many references to "mud people" and other terms popular with virulent racists. He begins flyering, helping out with Romantic Violence, and engaging in daily fistfights. He disrespects his parents while eating their food, squatting their downstairs apartment and stealing their car. His younger brother, with whom he was close, fruitlessly begs for a moment of his time. He's thrown out of school after school for fighting and challenging what he sees as Jewish lies taught by staff. When the Romantic Violence proprietor and a number of his crew go to jail, Christian steps up his recruiting. Getting more kids in Blue Island to be racist skins is easy, "like attracting moths to the flame." He spends his time beating people up, bossing around the newer crew members, corresponding with like-minded shitbags, and drinking beer. After a time, he leaves more of the hands-on violence to others and puts together a white power Oi! band. The other musicians, who he knows from the neighborhood, aren't skins but are racist. They release an album, play some shows and fall apart. When he hears another American white power band has been offered a show in Germany, he calls the promoter and talks his way onto the bill. He then resurrects an older racist Chicago band, with Nazi skins from out of state playing the instruments. They play the German gig and also shows and white power rallies across the American Midwest and South. While he loves the response his band receives while playing live, he begins to burn out on the ill-disciplined, drunken assholes in the bigger white power scene. By the time he's 20, he's married with kids and opens a record store near Blue Island specializing in racist material. Within two years, his marriage is over, he's abandoned the white power scene and is back living in the apartment under his parents' house.

Christian emphasizes that he had very little exposure to racism prior to meeting his initiator. The homogenous culture of Blue Island led to him never or rarely interacting with Jews and gays, two groups he rails against. He points to psychological factors which led to him becoming a racist organizer—missing his parents as a child, his desire to fit in and, even more, be seen as heroic. "I am my own invention," he says. "The actions and decisions of my youth and early adulthood were not determined by anyone who came before me."

This is a typical American mentality, and it's bullshit. Part of American mythology is that individuals are solely responsible for their outcome, while any larger social forces they may find themselves in should have no bearing. In discussing British skinheads, he allows for unemployment and other factors as playing a role, but in his own life, nothing. There's more written on the racial history of Marietta, Georgia (two sentences) than there is on the racial history of Chicago. I found this to be a serious detriment to the book, closer to lying by omission. His grandfather, with whom he spent many hours growing up and who took the place of his father is his upbringing, was a master corporal in the fascist Italian air force during World War II. After the war, Mussolini's body was dragged through the streets, and his grandfather, as many fascists did, immigrated to South America; only years later was he able to follow his children to America. The grandfather's best friend in Blue Island has a kid, Carmine, just six years older than Picciolini. It's Carmine who drives around playing Skrewdriver, and introduces him to the Svengali behind Romantic Violence. It's suspicious to me that Picciolini downplays any racism in his community and upbringing, yet later, as a notorious violent racist skinhead, "all types of white youth—…bookworms, cheerleaders, preps, you name it—began to look up to me, emulate me." But any analysis as to why Blue Island had so many potential and practicing racists is missing. It's as if their battles to ensure a future for the white race happen in a complete vacuum. The changing demographics or economic situation of the city, the political situation in the country—none of this is even briefly touched upon. The author would have us believe it was because he, personally, was so awesome.

He's given to ascribing motives and beliefs to people he doesn't know. He puts himself inside the heads of "minority adults," saying seeing one skinhead on the street led them to prepare to flee town. What the fuck? Like the general racism of Chicago cops, banks, city agencies and white citizens wasn't enough? Like these people already haven't had to deal with plenty of shit in their lives? When discussing anti-racist and Black skinheads who took action against racist skins, he says they feared racists "would ruin the music scene in their cities." What about just hating racism? It's righteous to fight and work against assholes who give skins (and white people) a bad name. When a member of his crew stabs his girlfriend to death, Picciolini calls it "a lovers' quarrel." Fuck you! This is minimizing intimate partner violence perpetrated by men, the last thing we need. (Nearly every victim of skinhead violence in the book is a woman or a teenager.) He's also feminizes behavior or people he dislikes, as with him and his friend smoking his last-ever joint, "giggling like little girls," or that of cops who supposedly "soiled their panties" at the sight of scary skinheads.

His discussion of skinhead culture is also problematic. He claims skins appeared in England in the '60s, "reacting against hippie culture," but this is bullshit. Particularly in a book that purports to be a counterweight to racism, it's shitty (and racist) to take something that came out of a black culture and say white people invented it. The first skinheads weren't British, but Jamaican. The fighting, sharp clothes, short hair and "rude boy" style came out of the tough (to understate it) conditions in Jamaica in the post-war era—conditions largely the result of British colonialism. It was Jamaican immigrants to England in the early '60s whose style (and sound) was bitten by working-class British youths. While many teenage racists might not be aware of this, for a grown man to publish a book on the subject in 2015 and credit white people as the first skins is wack, and contrary to the book's supposed point.

Like many memoirs, *Romantic Violence* paints the author in an unreasonably good light. Picciolini portrays himself as the envy or dread of all who know him—winning every fight, too tough for school, surrounded by underlings who hang on his orders, fucking cheerleaders, etc. While a Nazi organizer, he never fails at anything, except getting Rock-O-Rama to pay his band. (Also the time the anti-racists get away because too many Nazis are chasing them.) The book is loaded with what seem to be bullshit stories. "I have taken some liberties in recreating scenes," is how he phrases it, and though he claims this is as best he remembers, many tales strain credulity. Fighting a football team, beating up six dudes, having an older racist force him at gunpoint to shoot at a baby, the anti-racist skins who switch sides because his band's LP is so strong…The back cover claims his crew was subject to "recruitment by foreign terrorist dictators," though the book makes clear this didn't happen. Why say it did?

The stated point of the book is as a "cautionary tale" for people living hate-filled lives today. After seven years of fighting, organizing, recruiting and playing out, what causes him to leave the white power movement behind? Anti-racist propaganda? Gazing into the loving eyes of his innocent, infant child? No—working retail! Looking for money to support his young family, he opens a record store to cash in on his skinhead connects. (He claims to have made $1200/month selling Rock-O-Rama CDs while still doing seasonal construction work.) While white power music provided the bulk of his income, he sold a variety of other material as well. The diversity of his clientele means that to economically exploit them, he has to pretend to be nice to them. This leads to him coming to appreciate them as people. He claims that despite being a notorious Nazi skin, many anti-racists still shopped at his store, as it was too far to go downtown. One day the founder of an anti-racist crew, a Black skin, comes in with some younger kids. They start demanding he show them his white power stock, which he has behind the counter. His gun at the ready, he produces the CDs. Instead of expropriating them, the skins ask if he takes credit cards, and drop $300 on Skrewdriver discs and other material. The Black skin claims the racist music is so "dope" he's gotta buy it. This causes our narrator to question racism. A large-breasted Jewish woman disrobing in his store, then giving him a kiss on the cheek, adds to his doubts. I don't see how material like this—which doesn't quite have the ring of literal truth—will be helpful in dissuading current Nazis.

Despite white power music being his economic mainstay, he stops selling it and his store goes under. His wife becomes sick of his style as well (not that he's a Nazi—he tones it down around her—but that he's gone too much) and leaves. He moves back into his parents' downstairs apartment, where he hides from life for five years, regretting his involvement in the white power scene. He gets a job installing computers, which brings him to one of the many schools he was thrown out of. There he sees the old security guard walking the halls. But he's no longer the security guard—now he's the chief of police. Our narrator approaches and apologizes for all the times he called him a [disparaging term for Black people]. The police chief tells him "Ot's your responsibility now to tell the world what healed you." Retail? "…[T]o repair the damage I'd done to others[,] I had to fully expose myself to the light…" How going public with his racist past repairs anything isn't clear to me. Writing (and publishing) a book full of bragging about what an awesome Nazi he was hardly seems helpful to anyone.

So who is the audience for this book, which is basically a self-aggrandizing pornography of violent racism? It hardly has new or radical lessons that could benefit others—spend time with your kids? Peace through customer service? It fits in perfectly with sensationalist media accounts of violent skinheads and out of control teens. With zero analysis of *any* larger social issues, it's a tribute to a personality cult, and not an engrossing, well-written, or believable one. *Romantic Violence* comes off as a vanity project, of interest to no one except perhaps those who know Christian today. Even students of Chicago history or '80s white power movements in the US will find little here which could be relied upon. Maybe it will increase his cred with people interested in his non-profit group, Life After Hate (lifeafterhate.org). Picciolini today may be doing good work around racism, but this book isn't part of it.

—Jeff Mason

MOVIES

BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

CAROLYN KEDDY

The documentary **Fassbinder: To Love Without Demands** opens with the debut of Rainer Werner Fassbinder's first film "Love Is Colder Than Death" at the Berlin Film Festival in 1969. The audience's voice is building to a roar. There are shouts of "crap" and "narcissist" as Fassbinder is introduced. He walks on stage as the noise of the crowd builds. "You didn't like the film?" he asks. There are more shouts. Fassbinder turns and leaves without saying anything else. That makes me smile. It reminds me of my days in film school. My class worked on our final films all semester. Then we showed them in class and our classmates got to critique them. After mine was shown, the comments seemed comparably harsher. When my classmates were done, my professor asked me what I thought of my film. What could I say? I thought it was good. So I said so. Of course, Fassbinder would prove that he knew what he was doing.

Christian Braad Thomsen, the director of **Fassbinder: To Love Without Demands**, met Fassbinder at the 1969 Berlin Film Festival. Thomsen shot a series of interviews with Fassbinder throughout the '70s. The interviews comprise the majority of this documentary. They have never been shown and Thomsen states at the beginning of the documentary that he had not even looked at them in thirty years. The interviews are fascinating. Fassbinder seems completely comfortable discussing his life, his films and his process with his friend.

Fassbinder wrote and directed sixty films in fourteen years. **Fassbinder: To Love Without Demands** relates each film with what was happening in Fassbinder's life past and present. Fassbinder was born in 1945 after the Allies occupied Germany during World War II. His parents divorced when he was five. He had relationships with women and men. He abused drugs and alcohol as well as people. All of these events, the situations and the personal feelings associated with them are incorporated into his films. He also cast family, friends and lovers in his films. Short clips are shown to emphasize these points so it helps if you are familiar with his films. However, I could see his interesting, flamboyant personal story hooking in people who have never seen one of his films.

Thomsen fleshes out **Fassbinder: To Love Without Demands** with interviews with Fassbinder's mother Lilo Pompeii, actress Irm Hermann, actor/producer Harry Bar and child actress Andrea Schooner as well as clips from Fassbinder's films and Thomsen's personal recollections of Fassbinder. Thomsen narrates the film. Although there are some terrible stories about Fassbinder no one seems regret having known and worked with him. I am sure psychologists would have some interesting things to say about that.

The Fassbinder interviews in **Fassbinder: To Love Without Demands** are recorded pretty lo-fi. I saw the film at the Castro Theatre in San Francisco which is a large, restored art deco movie house. It's a great place to see a film. They have a good sound system and it was turned up really loud to accommodate the large crowd. However, that emphasized the harshness of the recordings. Combined with the German language, it wasn't nice on my sensitive ears. I have a feeling **Fassbinder: To Love Without Demands** might play better on a small one-speaker television screen. (fassbindermovie.com)

What Happened, Miss Simone? is the inspirational, heartbreaking and redemptive story of Nina Simone. Simone began her musical career in North Carolina as child piano prodigy Eunice Waymon. She would play piano at the church where her mother was a Methodist preacher. At a school recital two women saw her perform and decided to help her become the first black female classical concert pianist. One was a music teacher who gave her lessons. They also collected money to help her continue her education. After a year and a half at Juilliard she was rejected from the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. Her family had moved to Pennsylvania to be near her so she needed to get a job to help support them and continue her piano studies.

Simone acknowledges that she was not accepted at the Curtis Institute because she was black. It was due to this that she took a job playing piano in a bar in Atlantic City. Although she had never sung before, the owner told her she needed to sing if she wanted to keep the job. So she started singing, revealing a conundrum of her story. If she had been accepted to the Curtis Institute we may never have had Nina Simone. It was at the same nightclub that she changed her name to hide that she was playing "the devil's music" from her mother.

What Happened, Miss Simone? opens with a performance at Montreux Jazz Festival in 1976. Simone walks on the stage and stands by the piano. She bows and stands glaring out at the audience. She looks genuinely angry to be there. She stands for a long time receiving applause. When she sits at the piano an audience member shouts out something and she breaks out into a huge grin. She is enjoying it after all.

One of the stranger clips is Hugh Hefner with Don Adams introducing Simone on the Playboy's Penthouse television show. She performs "I Loves You, Porgy" in front of a crowd a well-dressed white people at a cocktail party. Like this performance, all the performances in **What Happened, Miss Simone?** are amazing. The musical clips along with interviews with Simone and excerpts from her diary paint a complex picture of Simone. Hearing her sing with such fearlessness then discuss her depression, her suicide attempts, the abuse she suffered from her husband Andrew Stroud (who was also her manager) and her anger at the injustices of the United States during the '60s reveal a intricate portrait.

Fortunately **What Happened, Miss Simone?** doesn't include the usual talking heads of present day musicians stating how great Simone was. The interviewees include her daughter Lisa and other people who knew her and have something personal to add to the story. Controversially included is an interview with her ex-husband Shroud. Shroud discusses rather casually their relationship including his abuse of her, even describing in detail an occasion when he hit her in the car.

During the '60s Simone is inspired by the Civil Rights movement. She records a controversial song "Mississippi Goddam" which seemingly ends her general popularity. Radio stations refuse to play it. But as she explains in an interview, "I'll tell you what freedom is to me—no fear." "How can you be an artist and not reflect the times?" Simone's music truly reflects her times.

Like most documentaries, **What Happened, Miss Simone?** focuses more on the formative and controversial years of Simone's career. After she moves to Liberia, she gives up on her musical career for a while. The complications of her bi-polar disorder are minimally discussed. Though it is impossible to cover every detail of someone's life in a two-hour documentary some more on Simone's return to performing and popularity seems warranted. (netflix.com)

I am always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to Carolyn Keddy, Maximum Rocknroll, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. If your film is playing in the San Francisco Bay Area let me know at carolyn@maximumrocknroll.com. I will go see it. carolynkeddy.com

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ACHTUNGS – "Welcome to Hell" LP

LP #2 from these Euro assholes, sure to be devoured by oodles of like-minded punks the world over. Perhaps too fittingly, this is a shockingly close aping of middle-era REATARDS, so kudos to ACHTUNGS for aiming at gut level. There's always gonna be a place for this stuff, and it's on the turntables of outta-shape degenerate fuckfaces. So I should stop yappin' and go buy one. (MC)
(Going Underground)

AGGRO – "Maelstrom" EP

This Toyko four-piece sent in a pair of singles this month. They're playing hyped-up, high-energy rock'n'roll with a strong hardcore vibe. The A-side, "Maelstrom," has all the ingredients, but the song doesn't come together until after the bridge, when they dub in (or turn up) another guitar and the whole thing goes up a notch. Then it's on, but the first two-thirds don't reach this level. The pair of songs on the flip don't quite get there either. "Rough Gun" sounds like it could be a great song, but it's not in the red like it needs to be. Live these guys could be great and I'd look out for future releases. (JM)
(Beer Drop)

AGGRO – "My Vice/Fried"

Japanese four-piece that rips through some nice mid-paced hardcore à la the ADOLESCENTS and that band the kids all love that rhymes with "Snack Gag." Yet they're updating this well-worn sound with some rather good shouted vocals and often feedback-laden guitar. The B-side is a really charged-up mix of punk tempos but through an early-'80s SoCal hardcore filter. In this case it reminds me of a version of the GERMS that really had their shit together (i.e. a non-junkie version). (JD)
(Beer Drop)

ALGO TOXICO – "Juntxs en el Caos" EP

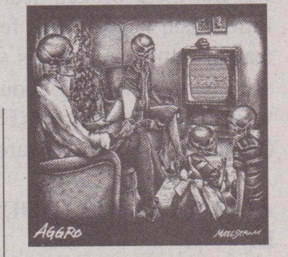
I would be remiss to not at least mention the cover because, while it might not indicate what a record sounds like, the outside is still the first impression for most listeners. Three naked torsos, buttholes and vaginas prominently displayed, with a sea of slimy looking eels and/or aliens yearning to reach them. You would be able to see boobies too, but they are covered up by cartoon kitty-cat heads. The whole thing is pixelated to an extent that wasn't even acceptable in 1995…except for the naked man hanging from his feet on the back cover. No, that dude is crystal-clear. Anyway, we still gotta play the thing, so let's go: crazy catchy, bouncy, Spanish-language punk with vocals that beg a comparison to Magali/LA FRACTION, and Andrew (AU) hit it on the head when he mentioned that the singer sounds old…as in not a novice, and with a serious leather element to the voice. Things calm down with the third track and the second side opens with a really mellow adult number with no edge whatsoever…kinda cool and spooky, but jangly guitars and no punch. But then comes "Porno Pogo Punk," a raucous number that will have you dancing before you realize that it sounds like a children's music version of a JOHNNY THUNDERS-style blues-based '77 punk tune. One more melodic track with lots of keyboards / noisemakers to close things out and I'm left trying to figure things out…I mean, remember the buttholes and the pixelated eels? It just doesn't make sense, but I like it. Oh yeah, and a member of ÚLTIMO RESORTE, just to keep you guessing. (WN)
(Radikal 1977)

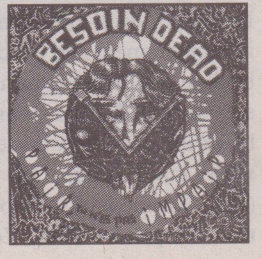
ALPARCHIE – "Spacepunk Vol.2" EP

These French Canadian geniuses have branded their sound "Penis Punk," which, assuming I'm translating correctly, means "screamy, post-hardcore bullshit for skinny morons." (MC)
(Zaxxon)

ALRIGHT – "Mixed Singles" EP

Totally fuzzed-out twee pop punk. From the looks of the cover art, you'd think this is going be party time music (cake, toys, sprinkles, sunglasses). But instead the lyrics take a more somber approach. As with 99% of twee pop punk, the lyrics are almost exclusively about





the disintegration of a personal relationship between the vocalist and their partner. Sometimes lyrics will turn towards a self-reflection and a general feeling of being inadequate, as a direct consequence of this spoiled relationship. I know in most cases, these songs are referencing boyfriends or girlfriends, but the songs become so much more fun when you pretend they're singing about their cat, teddy bear or favorite pillow. Or whatever else you can imagine! Now before I go too far, it should be mentioned this record is super good. They nail that "crying in your bedroom" sound. It's emotional, a little grungy but still soft around the edges. It's music you wanna play when you feel like shit, close yourself off from the world, and maybe whisper along with the lyrics. But these broken-hearted tunes can be a little much if you don't feel like shedding a tear of your own. That's when you imagine she's actually singing about a burrito, and the whole song transforms! (FS)
(Negative Fun / Self Aware)

AUSMUTEANTS / HOUSEWIVES – split EP

I read somewhere that AUSMUTEANTS are, like, one of the bands *du jour* but a reasonable punk enthusiast wouldn't ken that from this split EP, which is the HOUSEWIVES show all the way. Both of their tracks have a woozy, sickening tilt to them that will get your stupid, stupid head cupped in your chin *instanto*, contemplating the booze cure. AUSMUTEANTS ain't bad, but I'm going to spin their other efforts before this one. Buy with confidence. (RW)
(Total Punk)

AUTARKEIA / REPUBLIC OF DREAMS – split EP

REPUBLIC OF DREAMS plays bright, cloud-piercing blasts of warm math grind. Chaotic and inviting. Aggressive and inclusive. This is the peculiar, esoteric kind of thing I heard in the mid '90s that made my eyes bug out, and I obsess over hearing again today and can never find. Think SWING KIDS breaking into GAS CHAMBER. AUTARKEIA offers up a sludgy soliloquy with morbid and painful curtailment. Witchy, anguished vocals accompanied by post-hardcore proto-punk. With hints of melancholy crust the likes of DAMAD, each side complements the other in temperament and execution. The front and back of the sleeve features awesome monster art borrowed from John Kenn Mortensen, black ink on yellow poster-board. Give credit where credit is due. (JR)
(IFB / Moment of Collapse / React With Protest / Suspended Soul / Zegema Beach)

BAD COP / BAD COP – "Not Sorry" LP

I really love it when I judge something based on bullshit and I find out that I've been terribly judgmental and flat-out mean. That didn't happen this time. This is sickeningly sweet, predictable, polished stuff, and I couldn't seem to get into it. Fans of their record label will be stoked, as they are fast, musically tight, lyrically vapid (and not in that good way), and ladies. It was pretty rough for me to get through, though. (DZ)
(Fat Wreck Chords)

BASEMENT BENDERS – "Native Tongues" EP

Sometimes when you hear that a handful of your favorite music-makers are joining hands and starting a new band it turns into exactly what you wanted to hear and it's fucking fantastic. Sometimes, as we all know, it's embarrassing and unspeakably bad. This record is great! Sorry for the scare. This has members of SEXY, HIDDEN SPOTS, THIS BIKE IS A PIPE BOMB, TULSA, FUTURE VIRGINS and (as you probably guessed) about a thousand other amazing bands from Chattanooga and Asheville. For the abundant haters of region rock around here, I think this is a good spot to try to get your head out of your ass. For the lovers of the genre, well, you probably ordered this EP long ago. I heard about this band and I checked out the demo on that little internet thing that everyone is doing. To be honest, I just didn't get the hype. I thought maybe I was biased and maybe butt-hurt and bitter, but these re-workings are really fucking great. Angry, pretty, rough, tight, and well thought-out. The first song might be my favorite song I've ever heard Ashley play, and I already thought he was embarrassingly good. Get it! (DZ)
(Dead Broke / Drunken Sailor)

BESOIN DEAD – "Pair, Tu N'es Pas, Impair" CD

This is like the most boring moments of SONIC YOUTH with a meathead version of that type of man barking/talking singing that seems to be the thing with weird angry French bands (this is a French band) and then thrown onto the second stage at Warped Tour. There's some cool guitar riffage here and there but overall it's pretty snoresville aggressive indie music with echo on everything. (MM)
(Et Mon Cul C'est Du Tofu)

BIKINI GORGE – "Fuzztration" LP

French two-piece stomp'n'strum garage punk. Nothing heard here makes this duo stand out from the countless others doing this exact same thing, but nothing makes you root against them either. OBLIVIANS are covered faithfully. OK, next. (MC)
(Kizmiaz)

BIRTHDAY GIRL – "Peel" EP

Simply put, BIRTHDAY GIRL sounds like a modern hardcore band à la LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS playing noise rock. It's all rock'n'roll songs with mathy riffs and just a touch of sludge with a rasp and hysterical vocalist. Fortunately, these fools avoid the pitfall of trying to play shock-rockers with the lyrics and instead focus on some good old-fashioned self-loathing and bitterness. I think this record is basically all right, but I'm not drawn in because I feel as though there isn't too much of any one thing. The vocal performance isn't quite over the top, the recording is neither very thick, nor murky, nor overbearingly high end, the tones of the instruments are neither super good nor awful, and the performance is neither way tight nor crazy loose. Still, these are good songs. Good luck finding them anywhere, as there's no contact for the band I could find, and their bandcamp is selling downloads for $666. (LP)
(self-released)

BLACK BUG – "Frozen Energy/Push You"

It has been no secret that for the last several years, punks have been out all night at big, gothy parties. Here to add one more small log onto that bonfire of our vanities is BLACK BUG from Sweden via Bordeaux. This single boasts two tracks of throbbing, midnight-black electronic numbers that sound as much minimal synthwave as they do minimal German techno. Gurgling, minor-key synths blare over relentless and simplistic rock beats. There's a pretty frosty guitar lick over the chorus of the B-side track but other than that it all sounds pretty synthetic. One side sounds pretty much like the other, but in a good way. For serious, I wish this was a 12" with eight-minute versions of both songs. I feel like I'm listening to some real craft goth synth shit. It's not innovative but it strikes directly to the heart of what I want: throbbing synths, ominous chords held for a long time, goofy/spooky vocals, bombastic beats. It might be a bit too much eyeliner and teased hair for the synth punk crowd but it's good, so there. (LP)
(Avant!)

BLANK PAGES – "No Reception/Golden Chains"

The final release from this solid Berlin quartet. BLANK PAGES seemingly got their dream recording in Portland during their visit to the States last year, as their sound has unde-

niable similarities to some championed melodic bands from there. The band has a live energy that really works for this style and I've previously become more attached to their slightly faster songs because they really transmit that energy the best. At first I felt a little let down by these two tracks since they've dropped the tempo down a bit, but after flipping the single over a few times the catchy qualities really jumped out and infected me. The jangle in the guitars is perfectly sharp and the punchy drumming is very effective. BLANK PAGES perfected their sound and this final single is the proof. (MA)
(Dirt Cult)

BLITZKRIEG – "Apel/Tko Je Kriv?" EP

Croatia, our distant love affair continues! Underrated, shambolic protest punk from Zagreb. BLITZKRIEG formed in 1984, then a year later recorded their four-track demo in two days. All four are on this nice slab of wax, and fuck if they aren't all really good. The recital intro to "Apel" ("Appeal") from the bleach-blonde, leather-clad singer is giving me chills—it's annoyed and determined and snarky and passionate. "This is an appeal to reality." A rockin' riff rolls in and the gritty mid-tempo has me sucked in. The singer is kind of dragging his voice, sniggering between lyrics, while the guitars are kind falling apart in a warm wave of basement fuzz. "Tko je kriv?" ("Who is to blame?") is a certified jammer, with its chopped up guitars and impatient vocals: "Who is to blame for the quiet agony of society?" All tracks have been remastered but I enjoy the graininess to this recording; it's so analog and intimate, it adds character and depth, of which they already have ample. Comes with translated lyrics and cool pictures—some seminal Yugo punk! (LA)
(NE!)

BROKEN TALENT – "Broken Talent Rules No One" LP

Fuckin' sick! Most KBD fans I know have a real soft spot for Florida's BROKEN TALENT, even tho their classic *Blood Slut* 7" EP came out in 1984, a full two years after the industry standard KBD cut-off of 1982. It's gotta be one helluva classic to get KBD golems to pay more than $40 for a 7" EP from 1984 this side of the QUEERS. Imagine my shock to discover there's a whole fuckin' LP worth of BROKEN TALENT material. Well, I guess if I was a lil' more in tune with my mid '80s punk cassette game, I'd know the BROKEN TALENT "album" came out in 1985 on their own TPOS label. Oh well. This thing is sick, disaffected punk rock, just rough enough to keep the hardcores interested, with enough tuneful hooks to get stuck in the punks' heads, in the same way that early RED CROSS (O.C.) was the best band that ever existed. Wish the cover art was a little less abstract, I'm worried some people who really need to hear this won't! (GB)
(Florida's Dead)

BUG CENTRAL / THE SYSTEM / VIRUS – split EP

Despite noble intentions, this record just seems wasteful / misconceived. First the positives: the label (Grow Your Own Records) is run by ANTHRAX UK and is meant to serve as a platform for new material from like-minded artists. That's all well and good, but is it worth the effort? Shallow political themes, glossy cardstock covers, and uninspired songs. I appreciate the anarcho-pedigree, but that doesn't excuse a pop-up image of a starving child atop a squeamishly deployed MLK quote. This artwork reads like some shitty Banksy piece augmented by the pixels and corny fonts of a '90s street-punk record. The sentiment is fine, but the execution is very questionable. It's not about aging and being out of touch, it's about disengagement. (SZ)
(Grow Your Own)

BURNT BOOKS – "When There's Smoke There's Fire" CD

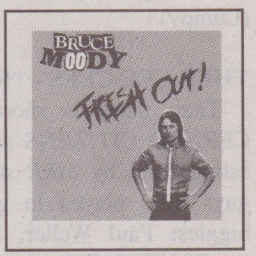
Seeing this band a few weeks ago brought me back to the early 2000s, where I'd frequently see bands made up of (real or imagined) crusty tree-dwellers who played harsh/soft songs that conjured up visions of a burning world or being lost at sea. BURNT BOOKS conjures up the same visions, but are far better and more unique musically, and that they are ex-GUYANA PUNCHLINE and that this was produced by a member of KYLESA is somewhat sonically relevant in terms of the overall tone. Their sound is dark, metallic, ever-shapeshifting, and likely draws from both technical and avant-garde sounds, with often dissonant riffing, off-kilter drumming, and melancholy noodling, among many other things. A lot of the record is fast and frantic, but they sometimes descend into tempered yet tense somber parts, and the singer has a good enough voice and range to fully do this element justice, when she isn't passionately screaming or growling the rest of the time. An LP version is in the works, but I'll be keeping this CD in the meantime. (DG)
(Retro Futurist)

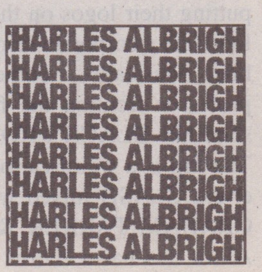
CANADIAN RIFLE – "Sexually Fucked/You Are My Junk"

Another stellar release from these three Chicago dudes. Always gruff and dirty, but there's a sweet REPLACEMENTS worship that seems to be swimming around underneath. I kinda feel like I could watch these guys play for a week straight. (DZ)
(Dirt Cult)

CAR CRASH – "Bright Future?" EP

Frantic punk from Japan. The A-side offers an expert pairing of "Execution" and "I Don't Care," two jammed-together 70-second bursts of punk, mostly informed by pick-a-hit UK classics of the genre. It shocks you immediately and provokes repeated plays before moving on. The trouble is double though, as the flip's "Bright Future?" offers a moodiness and menace from the band stretching out and creeping toward the kill. When it's over, you're dead. Assuming you have any love for bands like KEEN MONKEY WORK or the BLACK AND WHITE, then you need to make CAR CRASH a top priority. I have! (MC)
(Mangrove / Secret Mission)





C.C.T.V – "Quiet" EP

The coolest record of the year so far at least to these ears, total nervous frantic post-punk created in the furtive fertile NW Indiana scenery…The songs are tightly wound fraught invocations of the indignities of modern life, anxiety and paranoia, everything sounds like it was recorded on a boombox at the wrong speed adding to the strange feeling of other-worldliness, like walking through a dead mall full of fake plants and broken ideas. It's perfectly retro, really sounds like a recently excavated secret basement from the 1979 New Wave/punk collision, but it's from now, and is fresh yet eternal. The sputtering drums and stumbling bass with that sick dollar store guitar sound, while the coolest vocalist lists her demands and concerns. It's just so fuckin rad, like SU TISSUE fronting DEVO at their most hardcore…I think it sold out, but a repress is on the way. (LG)
(Lumpy)

THEE CEE CEES – "Solution Songs" CD

Their name is short for THEE CONCERNED CITIZENS and they're an interesting band by *MRR* standards. These UK guys have played in groups with various biggies: Paul Weller, Joe Strummer, and the BLUETONES. They have a hard-edged Brit pop and rock'n'roll sound with a slight blues touch. I'm pretty fond of UK popular music when done right. I'm hearing SUPERGRASS, MANIC STREET PREACHERS, MEKONS, and DR. FEELGOOD. The political bent doesn't hurt, either. Not your normal *MRR* comparisons but if you have your guilty pleasures check this out. (RL)
(Blang)

THEE CEE CEES – "Have An Analysis/ Solution Songs"

This is hella weird—a band that look like traditional punks with bomber jackets and loads of band badges, minus the member who looks like a SUICIDAL TENDENCIES roadie. Then there's a bit of Marxist analysis on the back cover (and in their lyrics). Oddly for a band that's called "Communist Rock" there're prominent Twitter and Facebook logos as well as a QR code printed fairly big. (Sure, tons of people used these sites but by putting their logos on the back it makes this look like a corporate seminar for Galaxy mobile.) Musically, it comes off like a college professor fronting the fuckin' boring AOR shite like BLACK CROWES on the A-side. The flip is a weird cartoon featuring the later-era CLASH mixed with MADNESS and GRAHAM PARKER & THE RUMOR?!? All of this has a chorus that comes from an episode of *The Muppets* where they do a shitty version of IGGY's "The Passenger." Soooo I have *no idea* where they're on about even though their hearts are in the right place. (JD)
(Podrophonia)

CHARLES ALBRIGHT – "Short Skirt" EP

I guess the press release they sent with this was right, I suppose "Short Skirt" does sound like mid-period BLACK FLAG if you want it to or something. There's like screeching or whatever. (Did you see how many qualifiers I used there? This is a very qualified review.) There's a part in the second song where he goes, "Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they're not after you." Yeah dog, "can't sleep, clowns will eat me" right? Fuck, man. Just sing "Louie Louie" to the melody of the song if you can't think of any lyrics. (BB)
(Sacramento)

CHARM BAG – "Voodoo Rocknroll" LP

Rudimentary two person male/female garage tribute to the GORIES: they have a song about how much they love the GORIES, ("Do the Gories") *and* cover "Charm Bag" *and* are called CHARM BAG. Too much? Like one of those BEATLES-ploitation records that came out in the early sixties?? The cover art is fucking wretched, it's like a combo '80s bubblegum comic/K-Mart attempt at Pushead bootleg skate art, but also somehow looks like a crust/metal t-shirt. It's so much more bleak than that sounds; beyond just being so corny, it is also just racist, depicting a voodoo doctor in all the grimmest stereotypical '50s adventure mag glory. The record is not terrible, just a very *basic* love letter to one of the coolest bands ever, but it somehow doesn't seem like a necessary use of our precious natural resources. (LG)
(Kizmiaz)

ALEX CHILTON – "Ocean Club 77" CD

Honestly, for no reason whatsoever that I can think of, I've never really gotten into BIG STAR, Alex's super influential band. I remember when the reissues came out, and a lot of my friends were shitting their pants. I didn't take the bait. I think now that I probably should have. What we have here is a great sounding live recording from 1977. Kinda slower, more personal power pop. There're a few BIG STAR songs and a few covers—most notably, for me anyway, being a killer BEACH BOYS track. While this might not be an audiophile's wet dream, the live sound is pretty lovely. Instead of being distracting and terrible, the glasses clinking and crowd conversation in the background was kinda dreamy and made me feel like I was there with a shitty drink…go figure. This is also available as a double LP. I would very much like to have that, because this is really great. (DZ)
(Norton)

CHIMERA – "El Delirio De Lo Cotidiano" CD

This trio from Monterrey, Mexico starts their CD with a quiet intro before turning to a pounding, martial beat. They utilize this dynamic throughout, using mellower moments with pained bellowing or tom-heavy drums laid over, then double-timing it through heavy thrash. The second track, "La Vida En Sueños," is their best, mixing a stomping, swinging section in with the mellow / driving contrast. Unfortunately, it's preceded by a two-and-a-half minute sample, movie dialogue I think. Even if I could follow what they were saying, I can't imagine I'd want to hear this repeatedly. This is a band with a strong sound, but mostly the songs aren't there. Awkward transitions, less-than-crucial thrash, and a couple fade-outs where I thought they just didn't write an ending all made me think this is a band in its earlier days. The lyrics, sample, and interior writings are in Spanish. The lyrics are printed as one paragraph, so it was difficult for me (whose Spanish sucks) to follow along by the middle of the disc. The first half (except the sample) is strung together almost like one long song, which would seem to parallel the live show. As diverse crust goes, these folks are still a work in progress. (JM)
(Confrontación de Ideas / Crust or Die / Exabrupto / Hot / Jamila / Negative Days)

CLOUD RAT – "Qliploth" LP

This LP is a masterpiece of whirlwind grind, metallic hardcore, quasi-black metal, and atmospheric post-rock all intertwined to create moving, dynamic songs that take on a variety of tones and go in natural yet unpredictable directions. While the harshest moments of this record are contrasted by a production that's soft around the edges, the frequent drifting-at-sea post-rock lulls with shining melodies complete the dynamic range, with the screeching vocals fitting whatever the tone happens to be at any given moment. The progression of the LP as a whole doesn't necessarily unfold over its course, but as a collection of songs, this record is great. (DG)
(Halo of Flies / IFB / Moment of Collapse / React With Prostest / 7 Degrees)

COBRA SKULLS – "Live at the BBC" EP

I'm just going to admit that I have no idea who these guys are, and with this record being one of them there Record Store Day special releases, their relationship with Fat, and…well, this being recorded live at *the BBC*, I had super low expectations. I was in for a pretty pleasant fucking surprise. Catchy, snotty, short, and sweet. Melodic street punk? Shit, I don't know, but I like the hell out of it. I hope their studio recordings aren't super glossy and shitty, because I really love this. (DZ)
(Red Scare)

CONEHEADS — "L.P.1 aka 14 Year Old High School PC-Fascist Hype Lords Rip Off Devo for the Sake of Extorting $$$ From Helpless Impressionable Midwestern Internet Peoplepunks" LP

Saved for posterity in our age of austerity is this, a collection of the first two CONEHEADS demo tapes from last year on one LP. Throwbackism operates on every level in appreciating this band: their pitched-up *Hardcore*-era DEVO / DOW JONES AND THE INDUSTRIALS sound recalling the end of the '70s, their until-now cassette-only releases and mailorder sheets accompanying them could have been the residue of a *Bloodstains Across the Midwest* gem, and the fact that you could only get it online through Mediafire takes me back to my upbringing in the age before Bandcamp. Getting the demos pressed to vinyl brings us to the current, I guess. Anyway, the music is still great and you probably already know that. Even if you're in general skeptical about getting an LP of a tape, there are moments here that deserve preservation and high resolution. Like, the squelched scream at the end of "Alien and Warm" that gets pitch-bent to end the song is just immortal and priceless. Sometimes the low points of a demo can get more interesting as time rolls on and the tape gradually approaches disintegration. But if you can't hang with the CAL & THE CALORIES feature or the TALKING HEADS cover you just have to live with it this time around. The goofy moments would keep you from guessing that they can actually write good lyrics; another benefit of the LP press is a full lyric sheet; read it and weep. Part of me hopes that the CONEHEADS will just chill for a second and do a 7" of four songs as great as "The Way Things Am." But how else can we ask for brilliance but to let the three members of this band (all three of their initials are MW, if you were wondering) work at their own manic pace? (EW)
(Erste Theke Tonträger)

CROWS – "Better Off Dead" LP

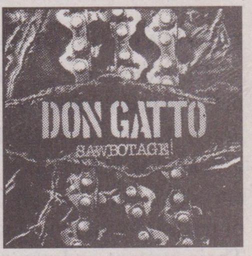
This menacing debut from Dublin's underbelly is sure to rattle some cages. The gap these lads bridge in hardcore is not easily executed and rarely results in such a well-made record as this one. The tunes on this are so well written it would have been a top pick had they *hummed* them. Beyond the raw quality of the songs, everything from the guitar tone (nailed it) to drum pace and bass production (yes please!) are spot fucking on. Channeling the nihilistic demeanor of the CURSED fed through some of the less metal (but still kinda metal) filters of an ACEPHALIX or even Japan's CROW, all while still having a youth crew undertone, this collection has a variety of sounds that seamlessly blend into one focused hardcore record. Highly recommended! The sound clips, mini-leads and oooh, that *chug*…all just icing on the cake. (RM)
(Distro-y / De Graanrepublick / Superfi)

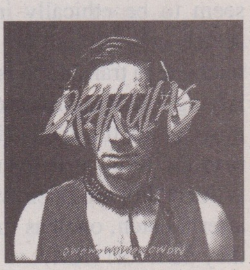
DARK CIRCLES – "MMXIV" LP

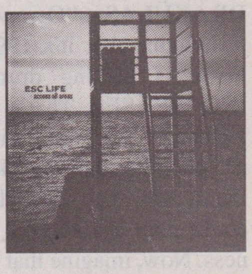
The DARK CIRCLES cover art is none more black. On the flip side, there is a woman hanging above the floor whose face is obscured by shadows. And the music is none more cheerful. Things start off fast, with an immortally black icebreaker. However, DARK CIRCLES quickly break away into beautifully orchestrated blackened punk with a D-beat pace and dual vocals. Much of this draws from the realm of '90s crust but the modern offering is the sinister drum fills and blasts and ambient moments and, ultimately, its sheer despair. By the end of side A I was completely immersed in livid, destitute death punk. I want to say, if HIS HERO IS GONE, DARK CIRCLES is just hiding under [his] bed to add to the hopelessness. If a punk band could evoke terror without trying, DARK CIRCLES would be it. Never folding over into cartoonish make-up fog rolling, this LP rocks on so many levels both sonically and with ambiance and spirit. Doggone, this drummer is licking my face off with blasts like a windy monsoon against a window. The aesthetic is one of the blackest metal or goth band, but the music is 100% scorching punk. There are some progressive guitar solos that truly elevates to this to the horizon between dusk and the darkness. This was mastered at Audiosiege, and those guys know how to cook up LPs sizzling and crusty. And I'm gently laid to rest on the outro... Gorgeous work. (JR)
(Desorde Ordonne / Doomsday Machine / 1859 / Grains of Sand / Moment of Collapse / Replenish)

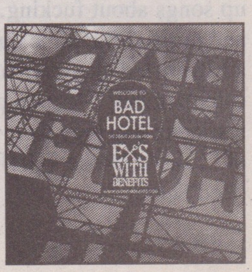
DESTINATION LONELY – "No-One Can Save Me" CD

Some garage trash inna wild Rip Off Records meets '80s *Nuggets* revival manner with Swampland affectations, it's tough destruction and if you are that way inclined you should grab it…One of those records that does everything per the François Fonzie rulebook, disaffected French sneer over oscillating farfisa and a guitar sound that could be surgically removed from one of the groups on one of those *The Chosen Few* comps. When he sings in French it is much cooler somehow. At any rate the lyrics in English are embarrassing, reading like journal entries from an girl-hating emo teen who thinks he's Tom Waits?! "Smoking cigarettes in the dark/I try to find the way of my life." Nein Danke! Listening to someone whine about his ex being a whore in broken English is definitely not what I wanted from punk rock. Try the drano, pal. This is a formula that gets boring, like being stuck in a bar when the support band plays for an hour and a half. For a group with a former member of the FATALS this is pretty dull, it doesn't quite capture that mutant frenzy, but I am sure angry divorced dads will rage hard to it… (LG)
(Voodoo Rhythm)









DOCTOR BISON – "Dewhursts: The Musical / Bring It On" CD

So this UK band got by me when they were together in the '90s, which is surprising because they feature Dickie Hammond of LEATHERFACE fame on guitar. For one thing, this isn't really punk. Maybe hard-edged alternative? There is a trace of a Southern rock feel, so this reminds of the under-appreciated ARMCHAIR MARTIAN and major label-era DOUGHBOYS. This band also included two guys from the ABS who I don't know but figured I'd throw this in for you Brits. This is good and I'm sure it will grow on me even more. The '90s had lots of punk guys' bands whose songs could have cracked rock radio so timewise I can put this in perspective. This reissue includes an LP, an EP and four unreleased tracks. This is part two of their discography. (RL)
(Boss Tuneage)

DON GATTO – "Sawbotage!" CD

This four-song gem is sung in English by the chainsaw-obsessed Hungarian powerhouse DON GATTO. I'm definitely feelin' a heavy MADBALL / BIOHAZARD influence here even though the thug-core element of negativity and violence isn't super evident. Their content and presentation hover around the monotony and stress of life; the members seem to be ethically inclined although the scarce info I found on the group I couldn't read due to translation issues. All in all, a satisfying four-song release. If you were to pick this CD off the shelf, observe the cover and read the title…it delivers. The closing track is titled "For the Friendship For the Fun," and after a listen, one has to believe that is what they do it for! (RM)
(self-released)

DRAKÜLAS – "Owowowowowowow" EP

Imagine that it's 1993 again and Danny Panic is playing drums for SCREECHING WEASEL. That's probably OK, right? I mean, if you were alive and a punk then, it's possible that you liked them and Danny Panic was their best drummer because he could play a 16th beat like nobody's business. Now, imagine that instead of veiled references to misogyny, you just have straight up songs about fucking…and misogyny. Oh, and drugs. I think the dude references having an 18-inch dick. Seriously, the music is really catchy in that '90s pop punk way but the lyrics sound like they were written by a 12-year-old…or Axl Rose. (GH)
(Red Scare)

ESC LIFE – "Access All Areas" CD

So this band has an alternative rock feel à la GOO GOO DOLLS, BETTER THAN EZRA, and various Jade Tree and Vagrant bands that toed that line. This is guitar-driven pop but what is strange to me is that these guys are from Croatia. I was figuring they were US modern rockers throwing their name in the major label hunt hat. This is a good poppy band but there have been lots of bands just like this, at least in the US. (RL)
(PDV)

EXES WITH BENEFITS – "Welcome to Bad Hotel" CD

"Imagine you are some lady sitting on a bus and a guy starts talking to you, he says he's in a band called EXES WITH BENEFITS, wouldn't you just get up and leave?"—Brace Belden (LG)
(self-released)

THE FUCK OFF AND DIES – "Dear Liver" CD

Right off the bat it's obvious what these guys are into: partying, swearing and '90s pop punk. This one's better for the kids but I must say soundwise these guys got it down. Good full production, tight playing, catchy bratty tunes. Pop punk that will piss off the parents. If you desire NOFX or GREEN DAY with non-stop foul language, your ship has arrived. Don't tell anyone I like this. (RL)
(self-released)

GOLDEN PELICANS – "Oldest Ride Longest Line" LP

Hard rock riff riders—for once the vocals on a record like this don't make me just turn the fuckin' thing off halfway thru the first song so I can slap out a bad review. This is corny as all hell but it's endearing and good. I am a man after all and certain things I guess just appeal to me—HARD ROCK is one of them. I love HARD ROCK. HARD ROCK RULES. (BB)
(Total Punk)

GROANING GROOVE / HOLY SHIT! – split EP

Haven't heard much from GROANING GROOVE since their split EP with TANTRUM several years ago, and it seems like time has helped them to tighten up their game quite a bit. Their two songs on this split are meaty mid-tempo rockers with a hardcore backbone, joining the repetition-heavy riff style of KARP or GREENMACHINE to some wild early BLACK FLAG leads and swaggering vocals. "Earth Blues" is a legit track, definitely the best song on this record. HOLY SHIT! have a bit of a wackiness factor that I would usually find off-putting, but they definitely make it work for them by being interesting songwriters. Their tracks veer wildly from bare-bones bedroom punk to blast-beats, with lots of crazy time changes and a vocalist that's huffing and puffing to catch up. They're not that similar a band, but the goofy vibe and eclectic style remind me a lot of FAT DAY. (AU)
(Snuffy Smiles)

GUILTY BY ASSOCIATION – "Coming Home" CD

A melodic hardcore band from Las Vegas, these guys are decent and have been around since 2001 although this is only their third full-length. I would lump them in with the heap of similar bands that used to play Warped as well as the GENERATORS, PENNYWISE, and SUICIDAL TENDENCIES—not so much on the level of the mentioned bands, but genre-wise. These guys don't stand out for me but there are worse out there. (RL)
(SquidHat)

GULF OF THE AFTERGLOW – "Purple 7" LP

Pretty nice, low-fi, often mellow and slow (OK, "wimpy") and strummy indie rock. There's some neat early '60s rock influence on "Head by the Hair." Overall, they have strong influences from folk and psych which seems to come off like a lot of the old Shrimper label bands: SENTRIDOH, FRANKLIN BRUNO, SUPREME DICKS, etc. It's far from any type of *Maximum* type of rock n' roll. I mean, the ballads "Wheels Sing" and "When I Wake Up" are both nice in a summer campfire sorta way. Even though this is often "wimpy" or "mellow" doesn't mean it's bad. The REPLACEMENTS-y "Deloria" is a really good rocker and then they jump back to acoustic parts. Pretty interesting stuff altogether. I'm not sure why the insert only had lyrics for two out of the ten songs but maybe they were being "arty"?!? (JD)
(Dead Broke)

HARD STRIPES – "Unconditional" EP

This EP is *so* "U.S.A. HC—2015." The fast parts are '80s Boston rips, some Oi! nods, every song has a mosh part, and a smattering of mid-paced "mutant" punk stomps. Completely cliché, but HARD STRIPES does it with finesse, and an overwhelming power that leaves the desired target neutralized. (JU)
(Triple B)

THE HEMINGERS – "Q: What's a Heminger?" EP

Lo-fi is the order of the day and I have absolutely no issue with it. This is '60s-influenced garage music that is delivered in a style that is just barely in control. They maintain, for sure, but there's a level of chaos that will have you wondering if the wheels are about to come off. The energy is incredible. This is the kind of music where you'd expect the lead singer of the band to show up on stage in a gorilla outfit. (And, no, that is not an insult.) If the idea is to have fun, these guys have figured things out. (KK)

(Magnetic South)

HI FI NINJA – "Take It to the Grave" CD

High energy r-a-w-k *rawk* from Paducah, Kentucky, HI FI NINJA are riiight on the borderline between punk rawk and bar rawk: there's a kinda noisey JESUS LIZARD vibe to songs like "Crawl" and "Dear," but the heshin' vocals and clean production keep one foot planted firmly in the tradition of bluesy American stompers. The DANZIG-by-way-of-SOCIAL DISTORTION *whoa*s sprinkled liberally throughout actually add a pretty nice rockabilly edge, and when the hooks land they tend to be pretty damn memorable. Quite well done for this style, I can't say this is really my jam, yet there's no denying its appeal as the soundtrack for an ill-fated bender. (WB)

(self-released)

HI-FI'S – "Look What You've Done/I Don't Know Why (You Love Me)"

NERVES-y sounding reissue of Toronto power pop 45. A tasteful record for discerning adult listeners. '70s. "I Don't Know Why You Love Me" is definitely a hit. Got that DIODES kinda sound. Also, as an aside, I think about half the people, and actually maybe even more like three-quarters, in this country need to die in order for us to achieve even the beginning of a socialistic order. (BB)

(Meanbean)

HOLY SHIT! – "Old Hat" EP

Milwaukee stalwarts start their EP with "Delete Yr Myspace" and follow it up with "Another Sucky Day In Shitsville," then a song featuring the line *"fuck everything in the world, seriously."* That's the kind of fellows they are…they are going to do this and do it hard, and they do not give a shit about cool or prestige. Nine tracks of irreverent start/stop hardcore steeped in Midwestern originality and beer. Maybe a lot of beer. Tab's vocals are next level on this slab, dripping with contempt and an omniscience that makes you want to cover your ass. Everything is on the table with HOLY SHIT!, and nothing is impossible…a decade-plus into their reign and I feel like we still haven't gotten close to the full picture. Oh yeah…some of the most ridiculous cover art (front and back) ever—they really really do not give a fukk. (WN)

(Cat Trash / Dirty Hippy Barn / Vinyl Smash)

THE HULLMEN – "Expensive Taste" 12"

Intriguing hard rock from Wisconsin. The HULLMEN are kinsmen of ALUMINUM KNOT EYE, but bear little sonic resemblance. This is streamlined, no-frills rock'n'roll that veers toward punk but never quite goes full tilt. "Dead-On Collision" was the obvious highlight for me, sounding the most sinister and off of the lot. (MC)

(Golden Key, no info)

ANDY HUMAN AND THE REPTOIDS — LP

"Reptoid Rock Revenge" is the motto on the collage/lyric sheet. How and by whom were they slighted? The answers may be in *Fortean Times* rather than these pages. I, however, can tell you that so much of what makes this record great could have gone *terribly* in lesser hands: saxophones, synthesizers, rhyming "insides" with "intestines". It all comes together in the hands of ANDY HUMAN, rocker and composer. Some tracks toe the line of Boogaloo palatability, but there's an attention to detail and careful application of sheer noise all over here, the watermark of a dedicated stylist. The production here is polished enough to let the static and atonal saxophone-wailing stand out. High fidelity recording works to a band's favor for once. Then again I seriously think the internet-using public would flip out if this was recorded on a Tascam 414 and if everyone in the band was 5-10 years younger. Perhaps the world will appreciate this record after all, though we know too well how cruel America's tastes and ultimate fate can be. But seek out "I Got Soul" if you need a sample; rarely since *Rock'n'Roll Animal* have punk desperation and glam virtuosity come together in such a frothy eruption. I'd buy seven copies of this record if I could afford it, but I can't. Anyway, this record is one of the two most assertive statements on having no money in the city to come in this month. Some react to late capitalism in urban America by withdrawing; some stick around to try their hand at outplaying, outsmarting, and outlasting the suddenly very late night. Hand them the keys to the studio. (EW)

(S-S)

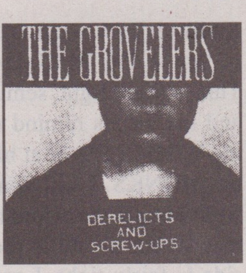
INDONESIAN JUNK – "Crimes" EP

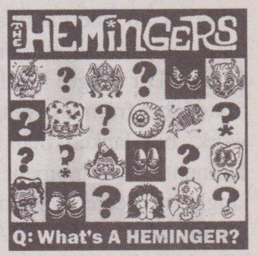
This power trio turns in three catchy tunes that combine songwriting elements of power pop, garage rock, and '70s boogie rock. The hooks and choruses are there, but they're matched with guitar heroics: the riffs and parts betray technical skills beyond the scope of most one-chord garage pretenders. Someone here actually spent time learning how to play while you were posing in front of your mirror with a leather jacket and a tennis racket. High energy stuff. (AM)

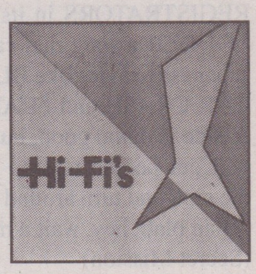
(Lost Cat)

SKIP JENSEN – "Spirit of the Ghost" LP

Well, I didn't know what the hell to expect from this suuuuuper slick, flashy as heck gatefold record. I didn't know if I should be suuuuuper bummed or not. What we have here is some dirty bluesy garage stuff from Montreal. I'd like to compare this to an easy go-to tar-







get like BILLY CHILDISH, but it reminds me of that stellar PAUL CARY LP much more. This is fairly tight, semi-spooky, sparse stuff, and his vocals remind me of the dude from the WOGGLES, or at his best, a little bit like the MONKS. I still don't know how anyone would be able to afford this super slick glossy record, but it sure is pretty, and the rock inside is fairly tight. I can see myself playing this all night. (DZ)
(Red Lounge)

KORROSIVE – "The Kaaos B-Sides" flexi

Rush-released in time for their Finnish tour with APPENDIX a month or so back, this flexi contains some of the best Scandi-HC out right now, especially on this Californian side of the world. Both tracks here are top-notch for the genre-exercises that they are, and the recording is remarkably full sounding for this maligned format; both drums and bass cut through for a strong overall sound. This says 45 RPM, but don't believe it. Apparently only around 250 were made and most went over to Finland on the tour? If you see it, grab it. (SZ)
(Nightrider / Shithammer)

LOUDER – "Tear Me Up/So Alone"

LOUDER are a Japanese punker-rocker outfit that has managed to get some releases out on USA labels, and so have established more of an international rep than many of their still-obscured contemporaries at the demo-CD-r stage. Their 12" on the Sorry State label from last year features some solid work, but lacked that blinding laser beam moment. That moment has arrived on this single on Secret Mission (hope you picked up this label's CAR CRASH EP, woah!) with "So Alone" which blazes past in one minute, eighteen seconds and is prime-period REGISTRATORS in its intensity, and gives LOUDER a song that can hang with current Japanese heavies like BLACK AND WHITE, CAR CRASH and FRANTIC STUFFS. The A-side is damn good, but "So Alone" is what will get people to stop dribbling bullshit at the club and turn around and watch this band. "Blah blah, hey, wait a minute..." (RW)
(Secret Mission)

MALE PATTERNS – "Thinking Too Much" EP

Recently I shaved my head again. Not for a defiant *fuck you* to the world and my parents. No, as the punk years pass (I'm about 600) I'm getting a little light in the pelt up there. These guys play some damn good POISON IDEA punk. Tough and throaty vox over testosterone enriched guitar licks. They even have a banger of a song called "Pissed and Old." So don't suffer the dreaded Horseshoe (I'm more of a Friar Tuck man myself), shave that noggin' and slap on the MALE PATTERNS. You won't regret it. (RO)
(Shock to the System)

MCRAD – "Lion Pure" 2xLP

Confusing collection of tracks from classic Philly skatecore shredders. Where is all the info/liner notes/source list/anything? *Lion Pure* covers the band's first 12" EP, the first LP, their tracks from *Thrasher Skate Rock #2*, plus almost as many other tracks whose origin I can't place. The fast, juvenile, thrashing of the first MCRAD 12", *Dominant Force,* is a charming, under-appreciated, standard-issue hardcore sound with more of a SoCal feel than just about everything else out of the '80s East Coast. Might fit nicely on *It Came from Slimey Valley* or something like that. The second record, *Absence of Sanity*, definitely steers in a more groovy, rockin', skate-rock (as opposed to skate*punk)* direction. The band's playing ability and songwriting "skills" certainly become much more present during this record. There are a few cool moments, but overall, this era of MCRAD isn't for me and I can say with confidence that after the 1970s, there is not one single band whose "heavier/more metallic" records are half as interesting to me as the earlier, more stripped down ones. I guess that's on me. In addition to this material, there are a *ton* of dub and reggae tracks on *Lion Pure* and I have no idea where they originally appeared. I started trying to research it but lost interest. Oh well. And then there is the issue of the track "Hesitation," from 2003. Wow. This one is shocking, in some kind of epic, sad-boy, nu-metal opus, like a groovy DEFTONES or LINKIN PARK meets…I don't know…vibe. Who cares. It kinda *rules* in a proto-TURNSTILE way. Does Dave Grohl have an opinion of this band? I'm sure he'll tell us eventually if he hasn't already. (JU)
(Not Like You)

DAN MELCHOIR – "A Non Person/Hesitation Blues"

Mr. MELCHIOR has been all over the map sonically over the past few years, but this here is a straightforward "protest song" electric rock single, featuring some pointed confrontational lyrics concerning his "Non Person" status in his now-former NC home. Turns out that you don't need to be in the Mission District or Greenpoint to be surrounded by Vert Shit Piles playing the Artist in Public. Hey Dan, the fact that you don't pony up with social (or literal) payola is going to keep you rolling in positive *MRR* reviews for the rest of your non-renumerated career. For whatever that's "worth." The flip continues the (re) invigorating bile bath. Fuck yeah. (RW)
(Spacecase)

ME TIME – "Episode 1: 20 Years Late" CD EP

It's a good day. Steppin' outta Claire's. Got my fresh new dangly earing on. Gonna text my bros. This FLESH WORLD phone case is *tight*! Things really blow here since Hot Topic went away. Hit the food court and *fuck it up*! Now you got the soundtrack. (RO)
(self-released)

BRUCE MOODY – "Fresh Out" EP

1982 Houston *power pop killer!* This spankin' new reissue makes some bold claims in the press release ("...for years it would cost you well into the three figures to get your hands on a copy") so I went back through my gmail. In fact, I bought one of the first known copies circa 2009 for $9.99 on eBay. I knew it was one of the first known copies, because it stumped thee US power pop collector extreme when I showed it to him. I checked Termbo, some Japanese dude posted about the record in late 2010, then nothing until 2013 and it was suddenly on everybody's wantlist. As a recent US power pop discovery, it doesn't get much better than this four-songer—all tracks are tastee power pop with that clean "radio friendly" edge. But more of the undiscovered pearl type than some revisionists' all-time wantlist staple—it's crazy to think pretty much nobody knew this shit until about five years ago. If that's not interesting to you, just pretend I wrote about sugary gumdrops and pop'n'roll. "Recommended New Discovery." (GB)
(Meanbean)

NEW GODS – "Gods Of Punk" EP

I gotta love a band calling their record *Gods Of Punk*. That's some bold ass Rick Flair wrestling type boasting and bragging. You won't find me doing communion with these boys anytime soon, though, as this record resides at Our Lady of Dullsville. "Killer Creep" has the most hooks here but most of it fades into hard rock meets hardcore man-at-the-bar fodder. They're Irish. There's an '80s cartoon skull on the cover and the sides are denoted by the alpha and omega symbols so the nerd factor is there as well. Like a mix between GLUECIFER, COCKNOOSE, and the FIX if you want a comparison that makes no sense but gets you to make up your own damn mind. (RO)
(Distroy)

92 – "Cenzura/Cukrarnar"

The travel back in time continues! Next stop: Ljubljana, Slovenia circa 1978. Like many bands from former Yugoslavia, 92—who get their name from the police's phone number, the equivalent to 911 in the US—fuse new wave sounds with reconstructed regional and traditional musical elements, all filtered through punk with a keyboard twist. 92 were informed by, but not dependent on or limited to, bands such as the CLASH, SEX PISTOLS and STONES, and concepts such as nihilism, Dadaism and social critique. Their logo of the number 92 inside a triangle charms and perplexes me despite its simplicity. This results in upbeat tracks with layers of choppy and grazing guitars, dancey drums alongside swelling bass, and soulful, raw organ riffs haunting the whole thing. The lyrics are critical and sharp. "Cukrarnar" ("Sugar Works Man") tells the story of a "raged vagrant on the street […], he's dirty and full of trash, in sugar works every night he spends, but then he wakes up on the bench." "Cenzura," which discusses the issue of state censorship, is slightly darker, with its dense opening riff and staccato keyboards. "Basically you corrected everything on your own." The keys are wonderfully expressive, tying this whole concept together in a unique manner; at times sounding almost like a child's melodica, at others more like a breezy church organ, or carrying the frenetic beat in an almost accordion-at-the-fair fashion. Their collected works LP, which was released in 2013 also by NE! Records and reviewed in these pages, is definitely worth checking out if you have an interest in early European punk, but this 45 works as an excellent introduction to this extraordinary band. Two tracks that are equal parts vibrant demonstration as they are creative exuberance. As always, comes in a beautiful packaging, with lots of pictures and translated lyrics. Check out their interview in *MRR* #378 and *hvala* NE! Records for doing such a great job! (LA)
(Ne!)

NIVE – "Employee of the Day" CD

This is a release of a one-off studio/fun project from 2010 recorded by one Alfram Wihalm of bands CYRUSS and RADIKALKUR to name a few. This brutal/sludge/metal guy from Austria recorded this as an ode to '80s US punk and it sounds like a Euro BAD RELIGION. It's not horrible but it is what it is. If I were up on the dark metal/sludge scene I would probably be more jazzed on this release. Don't be fooled by the fake flyers in the booklet with these guys playing with '80s well-knowns. Needless to say, for fans of Alfram Wihalm. (RL)
(Bloodshed666)

NO FORM – "Goddess of Fire" 12"

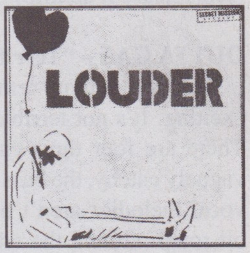
I must sound like some kind of sycophantic anglophile the way I've been raving about UK hardcore lately, but something is really happening over there. Apparently this thing that is happening is not limited to any particular major city, but is happening all over the island. I have been told NO FORM are from up north and maybe the cover photo is indicative of exactly where. Either way, this is a band after my own heart. I've seen reference made to certain hardcore bands alongside certain early industrial / post-punk bands I hold in the highest esteem, but really all you need to know is that this record is a complete fucking beast. The A-side contains four quick stompers accented by noisy effect-laden guitars and off-kilter rhythms while the flip is a side-length filth-dirge that really hits the proverbial spot. Just a two-note bass plod accompanied by manic guitars, pounding drums, cavernous rantings, and a mutilated saxophone. This is not for everyone, but those who are prepared to dare will be rewarded with endless delights. (JK)
(Muscle Horse / Reagent)

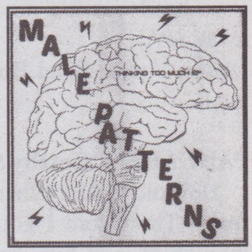
NO IDEA – "Jag Hatar Punk" EP

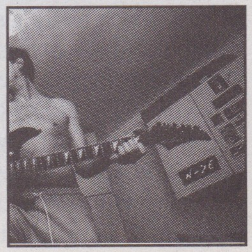
It almost seems impossible that there are still a lot of lost hardcore/punk gems left for the reissue scene to mine, but holy smokes, this is some crazy obscure shit that's actually pretty fuckin' great. NO IDEA were a very short-lived Swedish band that recorded a bunch of demo tracks in 1986, the best of which appear on this disc. This release isn't going to change our understanding of hardcore history, but it is amazingly well-developed early crossover with a hot-shit guitar player. You can hear bits of everything from ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT to LARM to MISSBRUKARNA in the mix, with the punk influence fading as the record goes on. The B-side is almost exclusively metallic thrash except for the barked hardcore vocals. Fuck, "Hellraiser" is a goddamn monster of a track, what a sick riff! If you have any interest at all in early crossover, this is an absolute must-have. I have to say this with depressing frequency lately, but don't let the shitty graphic design and badly pixelated photos put you off, this is quite a find (and you definitely get your money's worth as the record comes with a download of 30(!) tracks, including all demos and live takes). (AU)
(Just 4 Fun)

NOTS – "Virgin Mary/Shelf Life"

There's a reason we put NOTS's drummer Charlotte Watson on the cover back in the fall. The A-side of this finds her and bassist Madison Farmer riding an endless roiling riff and marching drum beat from start to finish. Regularly obscured by swells of synths (more noise than melody) and Natalie Hoffman's menacing howl, the rhythm section disappears and emerges again and again, somehow more incisive each time, the threatening calm in the midst of the proverbial storm. I was lucky enough to see these women play twice on their recent West Coast tour. Their records were some of my favorites of 2014, but they didn't communicate just how *tuff* this group of musicians is. I was blown away—frightened even! This single starts to hint at that ferocity. "Shelf Life" is more along the lines of their previous fare, but perhaps kicked up a notch in tempo. No complaints here, but I'm looking forward to more of the fury and freakiness that "Virgin Mary" portends. "Pray for us sinners." (GA)
(Goner)







THE ORNERYS – "Wanna Get Dead/ Keep On Dancin'"

This is the band I want to be in right now 'cuz I'm old, jaded, and plain fucking ORNERY. Sluggish, dirty ugly mean Robitussin Rock with a lyric spewer that's an abortion of SNUKY TATE and OZZY OSBOURNE. "Wanna Get Dead" is the keeper. Crudely done shitty sleeve completes the darkest of your mood swings. Fuck it! (RO)
(self-released, no info)

OUTTA GAS – "Terrified" EP

This is mid to up-tempo pop punk. It's not exciting. It's not terrible. OK, it's mediocre. There are four three-chord songs. They are vaguely catchy, the bass is overly present, the vocal melodies aren't bad. It's a bit gruff, a bit rough around the edges but not in a bad way. It's not the worst thing in the world. It could even make you dance, or at least nod your head but it's not going to blow you away. (PA)
(All in Vinyl / Dead Broke / Life On An Island)

PANCAKE – "Totally Sweet" LP

How old is this? Where the hell did it come from? The record I got looks like it's gone through at least five emergencies and a few illegal evictions, the artwork reminiscent of that old Temper Tantrum comp LP and the only information on the label that I could find was from an ancient Myspace page. I'm going to tread on, though, because I am a fucking trooper! As you might have guessed, this has a late '90s feel to it. Kinda heavy standard rock with maybe a secret love for '80s metal. The singer has kind of an overly sultry, soulful wail, which makes for a severely weird passionate/awkward/sweet/creepy version of FLESHIES "Runners Legs". The songs are really, really short, which helps get through the funk-styled metal, popular of the time. (DZ)
(Frog Manchu)

POISON IDEA / RÖVSVETT – split EP

Oh for fuck's sake…two legendary hardcore punk bands that have plenty of worthy material for modern punkers to seek out and enjoy, and my job for the day is to sit down and review this. Well for starters, we have a new POISON IDEA track called "Something Better," which really just sounds like a slow metal song to me. At least Jerry A. still sounds as dark and angry as ever. Then there's a live cover of 13TH FLOOR ELEVATORS. Flip it over and you get Sweden's RÖVSVETT doing a POISON IDEA cover sandwiched between two new tracks of pretty mediocre hardcore. I have nothing but respect and admiration for the legacy these bands have left for the punks, but this material just isn't strong. (MA)
(Just 4 Fun)

POWER MASTERS — "Home of the Grave" LP

This month's Mystery Record: no one knows when it got here, no one knows who assigned it, and even midway through listening to it I have no idea what it sounds like. Maybe a David Yow impersonator fronting the bar band from "Roadhouse"? I haven't seen that film with the sound on in a while, but imagine actually that there are two bands on opposite sides of the room trying to play the same song from memory after not practicing for six months. That's not meant to be a diss. There is definitely a laid back, behind the groove feel that they're going for here. Equal parts swagger and self-awareness were poured into this particular rum drink. I don't know if anyone should be allowed to name a song "Come On Feel This Noise," but POWER MASTERS certainly did. It has a few cool PENTAGRAM as played by thirteen-year-old garage band style riffs, linked by "Shreds"-vid quality interludes (that's a compliment). I feel like this recording doesn't capture the vocalist's delivery as well as it could though. He can manage the swing between atonal deadpan and desperate howl well enough, but some lines kind of fall flat. No moments are really going to get stuck in my head here, but that's probably not the point. I don't know if there's a one big track here that's going to make my ultimate drinking-in-a-parked-minivan-outside-the-club-after-losing-the-keys mixtape (strictly the EXECUTE and TANK), but a few are weird, loose, and heavy enough to plead their case. I do kind of want to see this band live now that I know they exist, so if I ever swing by Providence I will bring a jug of Malibu just in case. (EW)
(Surveillance Investments)

PSYCHIC BAOS – "Society's Lien On Peace Of Mind Can't Keep Us Down" EP

Shambling garage pop from the backwoods of somewhere humid, I'd guess… The slightly acid-fried, organ-driven sounds at times remind me of BUTTHOLE SURFERS but with the catchiness of GUIDED BY VOICES. Definitely an interesting release. (AM)
(Magnetic South)

LES PUNAISES – "Merci Et Encore Bravo (Best of Volume 2)" 10"

Raw and amateurish, LES PUNAISES' *Best of Volume 2* is charming. Bare bones garage pop songs—think RAMONES with a whole lotta CUB—are sung in both French and English, and it's tongue-in-cheek. It's got hearty French "Ha, ha, has," a weirdo cover of KRAFTWERKS' "Autobahn," and songs titles "Handicapunk Blues" and "Vollidiot"—I mean it's dumb but funny. Not to mention their name which is François for "bugs" and the disturbing cover of a naked man wrapped like a giant jambon, with hungry lady chefs licking their lèvres. C'est bien. (CR)
(Merci Et Encore Bravo)

PUTREFACTION – "Scavenger" EP

This new EP is absolutely crucial crustcore from Ireland. All the best elements of crust metal and hardcore punk come alive on this 7" from Dublin's PUTREFACTION. Powerfully paced and catchy rhythms collide with side-swiping changes that grab your attention like a noose. The jugular ripping D-beat earslaughter with echoey vocals is super dirgey as a bastardizing bombardment of low level thunders through. Attention any punk folks who went ballistic for SANCTUM and HELLSHOCK: PUTREFACTION throw it all together with your appreciation of SCATHA, DOOM and all that classic Euro crust and serve up excellent heaviness comparable to Minneapolis contemporaries KONTRASEKT. There's something very sincere about a three-piece that sounds like an entire war party. These four songs have enough uniqueness to be a classic EP right out of the gate. Mastered by Enormous Door Studios, only 300 copies pressed. This is a genuine ripper that should be appreciated for a while. (JR)
(Distroy)

QUTTINIRPAAQ – "Dead September" LP

Who would have guessed this band is from Austin, Texas? Straight from the BUTTHOLE SURFERS / SHIT AND SHINE school of "songwriting(?)". Heavy percussive repetition is the modus operandi whether it be live drums or primitive drum machinery. The vocals are drenched in echo and sometimes have that disgusting pitch-shifted baby voice Gibby tortured us with back in the bad old days. The dynamics of the guitars range from walls of feedback to more walls of feedback. A steady diet of TERMINAL CHEESECAKE, RUSTED SHUT, and recreational Rohypnol abuse could perhaps be the cause of such mutation. The track "Dead Birds" starts with a motorik guitar / drum phrase that could have been lifted from a lost NEU! demo that then crescendos into a blur of white noise and thudding bass. Side B relies more on electronics even including a "techno" beat. What is with the

resurgence of techno amongst the punks? Was it not bad enough the first time? This band sounds like they could be an interesting live experience, but I'm not sure how much time I would want to spend wearing headphones and shooting oil projections on the wall of a darkened bedroom. Avoid the brown acid. You might have a bad trip. (JK)
(Rural Isolation Project)

RATS BLOOD – "Low Life" LP

Wow, RATS BLOOD have done some fuckin' growing up since there demo days! This is huge, thickly-produced crusty hardcore that's definitely dancing on the border of being *crust de salon* (some of this stuff is very TRAGEDY), though I would argue that there's enough anger in the vocals and directness to the song writing that they fall more on the hardcore side of the fence. The best moments come when they throttle back a bit and find a nice groove ala the GASMASK TERROR-ish "Decay//Poisons", but they're definitely strong when they're going all out too ("Bottles"...damn.). The drumming on this record in particular deserves a mention, it's fucking glorious, super-busy and driving without ever being over-complicated. Also the recording and mastering are great, this is a fantastic-sounding record. At the end of the day, this isn't a trendy record or one that owes too much to its influences, it's a fucking pissed-off punch in the ears from Dublin, and it comes highly recommended. (AU)
(Dogs & Vultures / Dis-Troy / Donnez Moi Du Feu / Imminent Destruction / Phobia)

RAVI SHAVI – "Indecisions" LP

Now we're talking. This is rock'n'roll music, man. It's mid-tempo, it's catchy, it's got guitar, and bass and drums. It's got it all. Sure, it's also punk in an old HEARTBREAKERS sort of way and it's got the '60s garage thing going for it. Hell, it's even a little bluesy, but first and foremost, it's rock'n'roll. Yeah, and the dude owns this shit. He is playing his music and he likely doesn't give a hoot what we think about it. He/they are absorbed by what they are doing. It looks like there are four guys in the band, but they are a single unit. They're a band. If you're a fan of garagey punk/rock'n'roll delivered with a sense of purpose, you need to find this one. (KK)
(Almost Ready)

THE REPOSSESSED – "Born. Work. Die." EP

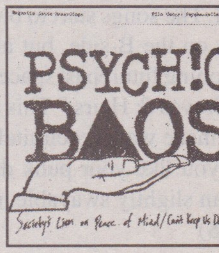
Yesss! I remember when Fids from DRY HEAVES told me about this band when the HEAVES came through the Bay Area a couple months ago ("Tell me about ladies who *rock* from Sheffield!"), so I'm stoked to be reviewing this. I liked their 2014 demo when I heard it and I bloody well like this too—high-energy, in-yer-face punk with a dry hardcore backbone. The sound is not overly heavy or the instrumentation overly complicated, allowing for few distractions and for the pure aggression behind the song structures to nip your ears right off. The drumming is dynamic and brisk, the guitars are abrasive string-breakers, the bass snappy and thick, while the singer belts out lyrics in gravelly English *and* Welsh! ("Defaid" rules! More Welsh please!) This is super pissed off and confrontational, while still packed with intent. It sounds snotty but not snobbish, stroppy but not bratty. My fave track is "Red Shift," not only because of the lyrics ("It's time to start all over again, new life, new place, new friends, guess there's nothing left for me, except for drugs and apathy") but also because the drumbeat is so visceral and driving, it pounds along to my anxiety palpitations perfectly. The same feeling of pointlessness comes over me with the laughing-cum-growling vocals on "Born, Work, Die," but the narrative gives me strength, as opposed to making me feel more depressed. Ideal for your mental meltdown moments, when you opt to punch the wall and scream in objection, entering warrior mode, rather than slump to the floor and weep in defeat. Comes in a cool blue and white silk-screened exterior, all courtesy of London-based Muscle Horse Records. I mean, really, could you expect anything less than rad from Bryony Beynon's label? (LA)
(Muscle Horse)

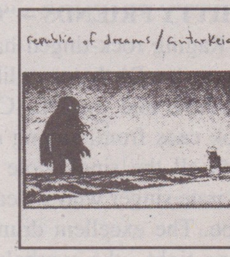
SCARECROW SONIC BOOMBOX – "We Are the (United)" LP

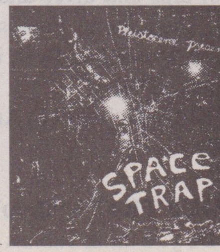
I'm sure there's a story behind it, but this band sounds like they got their name off of one of those Internet band name generators. They play blown-out, reverb-turned-to-9, low-budget garage punk in the vein of (*early*) GAUNT, the OBLIVIANS and even a touch of the FALL OUTS. As a still-recovering ex-Southern Baptist, I have to point out that there are some references to Heaven, the New Testament and judgment of criminals that seriously bummed me the fuck out, but you would never really know it if you didn't read the lyrics. The whole record is so noisy and chaotic that you could just pour a beer over your head while screaming something over the lyrics about having great sex with someone of your own gender and you'd be just fine. Anyway, the songs are seriously catchy and each one has enough dynamics to keep you interested. There are some wild stabs at a style of lo-fi rap towards the end of the LP that fall a little flat and just sound like JON SPENCER, but the closer, "Baby Money" is noisy and fucked up that it kinda, almost works. The record is pressed in an edition of 300 with spraypainted, stenciled covers. (GH)
(self-released)

SCHTONK! – "Strid" LP

Well this is an interesting one…Hailing from Oslo in Norway, these experimental Scandinavians are all over the map. The first song comes rapidly out of the traps with a hyper electronic drumbeat, sounding much like the JELLO BIAFRA/MINISTRY project LARD. From there, they switch it up quite a bit, but stick with the general constant of heavy guitars and machine rhythms. They cover the FALL somewhat accurately but then do a slower, heavier version of WIRE's "Mr. Suit." I haven't even started on the artwork yet—the large, multicolored booklet contains a schizophrenic collage of detourned propaganda, comic art, and a sequence featuring Barbie and Ken dolls in various sexual situations. This is defi-







nitely one of the more unique records I've reviewed for *MRR* in recent times. A great deal of time and effort went into this and I feel like you could spend a lot of time with it and get more out of it each time, especially if you can understand the lyrics… (AM)
(Salongplay)

SCREATURE – "Four Columns" LP
There's a demented, restrained energy that permeates the second full-length from these fuzzy Sacramento post-punkers, a subtle mania worthy of its description as "gothic." This sort of thing is all about the grooves, and SCREATURE succeeds by creating a thoroughly crepuscular feel without ever letting the beat drop. "Down Boys" is the front-and-center standout, the cold-funk bass taking the AU PAIRS-gone-deathrock vibes to their logical extension, and the twitchy tension that follows on "Faceless" is every bit as masterful. The songs start to blur together just a little bit on the B-side, but all is redeemed by the droning futurepast space-fi of the lengthy coda "Graves & Heirs." This album is too good not to make waves, definitely worth checking out if you like your punk dark, heady, and more than slightly swayable. (WB)
(SS)

SEXFACE – "Village Life" EP
This record falls on the more rock'n'roll oriented side of the UK82 fence. Unfortunately, that happens to be the wrong side of the fence for me. Still, I can appreciate the GBH-inspired rockers here, executed with conviction by these Montreal punks with liberal dabbing of filth and sneer. The first track here is called "Toilet Baby" and that oughta indicate whether you're interested in this. (SZ)
(Distort Reality)

SHITTY FRIENDS – "Crime Line" EP
Raging rock-tinged hardcore punk out of Lancaster, PA that very likely takes cues from BL'AST and the BLACK FLAG that they took cues from, among other beach sounds, with all the single-note riffs to match, and an irate singer who's clearly at the end of his rope. The excellent drumming keeps everything tight—the cymbals in particular make their mark on this record—and the songs do cool dips and dives and then end while you still want more. Four songs, only the third one is a dud, and I can imagine their live set is nuts. (DG)
(A Kid Who Tells On Another Kid Is A Dead Kid)

SPACE TRAP – "Pulp" EP
Do you think Salinas Records is totally badass!? If you are a fan of that label's brand of bedroom pop, you will absolutely love this EP. It's reverb-y to all hell, lyrics are on the poetic side of things (very appealing to your inner bookworm), and the guitar makes you feel like your floating in some clouds or something. If you've listened to the new JOYRIDE! LP more than twice, this should be the next band you obsess over. (FS)
(Pleistocene)

SPRAYNARD – "Cut & Paste" LP
To be honest (as I should be), this record is totally cliché pop punk. It's up-tempo, it's melodic, there are slightly gruff vocals, it's been done a million times, there isn't much to even say about it. It's like DILLINGER FOUR without the edge. (They had edge?) But just somehow it's surprisingly catchy. It's not all that bad. It might even make you feel good. It's not a revolution, it's not brilliant, it's not new but it has good feelings and maybe you should just accept that. (PA)
(Dead Broke / Square of Opposition)

THE SQUATS – "Noise Overdose" EP
Holland is known for having produced some of the best early punk and hardcore in Europe, but here's one that might have slipped under the radar of all but the most dedicated collectors. Four tunes from teenage Nijmegen punks in 1981…This sounds exactly like what you'd get when a bunch of snot-nosed kids pick up some instruments and try to ape their heroes in SHAM 69 and ANGELIC UPSTARTS. Ramshackle, desperate, and perfect. Lovingly reissued by our Paco under the bike shop in Stokey, with original artwork intact (which I'm about to ruin by sealing it up with green duct tape). (AM)
(La Vida Es Un Mus)

TAPEHEAD – "(My Life) Shot On Vid/ Turn Green"
Took me a couple of listens to get used to it. Hated it the first time, thought it was decent the second time, and came around to liking—though not loving, you know?—the third. (I won't listen to *anything* four times.) Good leads. Do more leads, all bands should play more leads. Would enjoy seeing this rock group live. For what it's worth, former RATIONAL ANIMALS/BROWN SUGAR band boys. (BB)
(Cherish)

THUG BOOTS – "The Justice" EP
Street-level street punk that's a few BPMs shy of the Oi! fetishizing that the hardcore kids are so into these days. But instead of stripping the politics for nihilism, THUG BOOTS wear their working class American Pride on their sleeves (well, mostly in their lyrics—their sleeves look to be solid darks and plaids aside from the Morrissey shirt, but there's only one band photo to look at). The tunes here are basic, well written and more than solid, though the vocals try desperately to make up for a lack of power with a gruff intensity that almost works. "Brickwall Battalion" is clearly the banger, two riffs, four chords, in and out like a lightning strike… but "Steel Cap Thunder" is the infectious song that I can't shake, just pure fist pumping street punk. But of course, when you get a street punk record in your hands with tracks like "Foreign Policy" and "Steel Cap Thunder," you go straight for the lyrics if you're a thinking punk…right? Pro-street level vigilante justice, pro-working class, pro-bonds of friendship, anti-pervert, pro-boots (specifically as weapons, it would seem)…I mean, they've almost got me convinced about 60% of the time…and that Morrissey shirt, I mean, based on this photo, these seem like five pretty friendly and mild-mannered folks from Texas. But apparently they are "Goons on the attack / We're all maniacs…brains all out of whack" and their "Battalion boys won't accept defeat." But the shit is good musically, guitar leads are addictive as hell, and I caught myself singing "USA for USA" more than once while writing this review. I have so many questions, THUG BOOTS…so many questions. (WN)
(Street Rock)

TROPICAL TRASH – "UFO Rot" LP
This record starts off with a real rush, this track "New Flesh" being a goddamn 45-worthy slab, the vocals featuring a lazy menace that works wonders on the more fragile psyches. So, with that winning hand laid down, you get ready for the bad streak, but it never comes on this—the whole first side is a solid avalanche of tense tonalities and sharpened stakes shoved in your earholes. *Not* boring, a repeat listen in fact. On the flip, these guys might start testing your resilience, as the bass starts rolling along forever like them Russkie steppes and that's a long, long slog kiddo, ask Ol' Nap who fucking *walked* the whole way, or the next Nazi you're drowning in an oily puddle out by the abandoned cement plant. Yeah, it's industrial depression dragging you by the hair, so it's taster's choice when you want to try twisting free. For me, right in the middle of the side. Overall, this is a damn fine punk record but I'm a bit conflicted. I say throw it in the river, and see if it floats. (RW)
(Load)

THEE TSUNAMIS – "Saturday Night Sweetheart" LP

Wow. This is super cool. I love '60s style garage music. And I love strong female vocals. And now I love the two together. It's toe-tapping catchy, with fuzzy guitars and fuzzy vocals. The guitar can be both piercing and mesmerizing. It's methodical and driving. And it's super lo-fi, without at all sacrificing quality. My head won't stop bouncing. Did I mention that I love it? (KK)
(Magnetic South)

VAASKA – "Todos Contra Todos" LP

By this point you should know what to expect from a new VAASKA release: it'll be raging and it'll be good. Much like fellow Austin bands CRIATURAS and IMPALERS, whom both share members with VAASKA, this is fast D-beat with searing leads and manic energy. "Mierda Systema" is the top track for me, but they're all good here. No shit with this bunch. (SZ)
(Beach Impediment)

VÉRTIGO – "Bajo La Sombra" EP

Punks from Barcelona harnessing the Portland sound. Very simple but yet catchy songs, much like the WIPERS, from whom their sound is largely derived from. The slower numbers sound like they could be tracks off *Is This Real?* while their faster songs are more equitable in execution to the OBSERVERS or NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS. A very dark and desperate sound. Good stuff. (FS)
(Tadpole)

VIOLENCE CREEPS – "I'm Broke/Gridlock" flexi

"I'm Broke" is one of those songs that is so immediately catchy, punk and destroyed that I thought it was a cover song. The band lurches through two chords while their singer Amber screams her fucking head off about all the shit she can't afford. The band ramps up their energy through the two paltry minutes of this ripper until it's on the verge of falling apart. It has an instantly classic sound that feels pure and raw in all the best ways. Without a doubt, it's easily one of top five favorite songs of the year. That's a hard act to follow, but "Gridlock" is also a ripper about being stuck in traffic. VIOLENCE CREEPS is lurchy, slow, destructive, pissed-the-fuck-off and perfectly raw. The soundtrack to losing your goddamn mind. This flexi (the worst format, my only complaint) comes with issue #16 of *Degenerate* magazine. (GH)
(Degenerate)

VIOLENCE CREEPS – "On My Turf" EP

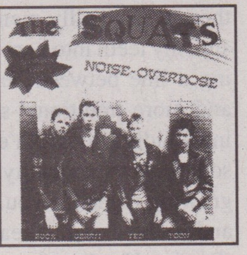
I don't know what to tell you. Yesterday I woke up, ate a shitty fucking West Coast bagel (masochism rears its ugly head), sat down at this computer and didn't stand up except to piss and refill my coffee for thirteen or so hours. This music is the soundtrack to that. Today I went to my low-paying job and my boss bought me lunch at the organic taqueria that is probably owned by white people and there was some sort of Instagram photoshoot going on involving fish tacos and a hot pink longboard and this was the soundtrack to that. Tomorrow I have to get up at 5:00 a.m. and get on a plane to Minneapolis to see my family which will be nice but we will probably get in a fight over my new finger tattoo and someone will get too drunk at dinner and we'll all feel terrible about it but it will also be kind of funny and this will be the soundtrack to that. I have my period and I keep accidentally bleeding all over myself. This is the soundtrack to that. Last night I had an unending stream of maddening interactions with a series of punishers and this was literally the soundtrack. It was the record release show for this fine platter and if you live in the Bay Area and you weren't in attendance, you're a poseur and a loser and an idiot. Too strong? I don't care. Fuck you. This is the best band in California. Maybe the entire West Coast. They make me wanna flip over tables and punch people in the face, but they also make me laugh like a maniac and wanna hang out and make weird art with my friends. It's funny, it's intelligent, it's infectious and instantly classic. Watch the music video for "On My Turf." You'll get it, if you've got eyes and ears and a semi-functioning brain. Watch it. Now. Do you get it? Who needs John Brannon when you have Amber? There's acoustic guitar and sax freakout and bass skronk and slow FLIPPER-esque sludge but also good old fashioned 'core and hooks for days. ("Drop Out," you're moshing!) This is a band that is getting better with every release and this record finds them at the peak of their powers, powers that don't look quite like anything else out there. Fans of the "catchy-but-weird" brand of hardcore du jour: if you want it tougher, meaner, smarter, catchier, weirder, more depraved —you're a punk, right? So the answer is yes, right?— get this. Wake up, sheeple. (GA)
(self-released)

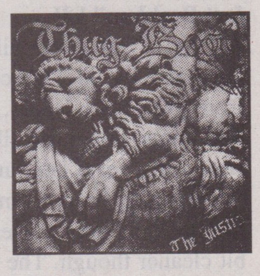
VULTURES – "At Home" EP

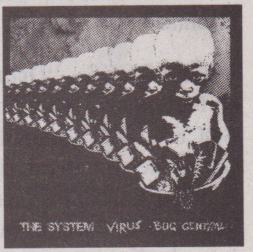
VULTURES put out one of "those" Dutch punk records that probably floated around in used bins for most of the '80s to be had for a penny farthing or a couple guilder's-worth of recycled puke until the KBD-alia craze hit, and then anything with a 1981 date and a leather jacket on the sleeve became instantly collectible. So, here we are. The best song on this is "Russian Spy" on the flip, although I wager lots of HC hearts beat a little faster during the proto-breakdown in the middle of "Alcohol." The A-side is okay, sounds right at home with the b-team contemporary CRASS school of releases. While there's been a batch of reissues of rare Dutch shit on this label, NEO PUNKZ takes the prize forever courtesy one of the most fucked up guitar tones ever captured on vinyl, with VULTURES being more of a pleasant "me too"! Pick it up to complete the set, I guess… (RW)
(La Vida Es Un Mus)

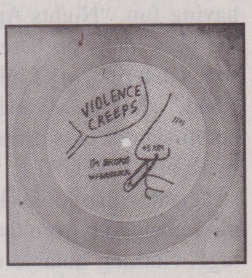
WARSICK – "Wasteland" flexi EP

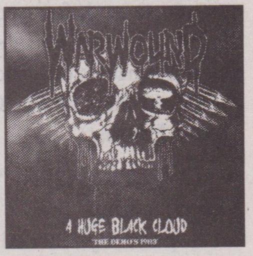
Blarrgh, arrgh! This is some gnarly Scandi-influenced crust with definite Japanese influence in the crazed vocals. There are some pretty good leads, but I wish that











there was a really memorable riff or hook to sink my teeth into here. They're kind of walking a line between being noisy and chaotic and more traditional-style crust without being solidly enough in either camp to give the songs a strong identity, but that's first release growing pains for you. It's a solid first effort and I'd be down to hear more. (AU)
(Rotting Head)

DAN WEBB AND THE SPIDERS – "Perfect Problem" LP

Fans of Dan Webb will certainly not be disappointed by this. It's certainly not a far cry from previous releases. It's catchy, melodic, mid-tempo pop punk, like if the RAMONES were forty years later and not as interesting. It complains about women who might not be true to their poor selves (boring). This is a bit cleaner though. The vocals don't have as many effects as previous releases. They sound more self-assured. It works for them. (PA)
(Gunner)

WET SOCKS – "Drips" LP

It's pretty easy to pigeonhole WET SOCKS—lots of similar bands are coming out of the woodwork right now. John Dwyer and THEE OH SEES have influenced a whole generation of weird, raucous, and (seemingly) unbathed stoners, whose overall aesthetic escapes me, but at least they look like their having fun. "Nights Apart" and "Drips" are the best songs on here. Fast, surf riff-laden songs that rip. "My Lights Are Out," "Sunken Road," and "In My Head" have that boom-boom-slap of bass drum and tambourine that reeks of TY SEGALL. "Sick Boy" has some swagger with spooky keyboards which is a nice change-up from the deluge of sleazy garage. Nothing notable on Side B other than "Jack Boots" which is a weird disjointed power pop song. Yuck. Vocals on *Drips* are restrained and focused, but the lyrics are flimsy. Most of these songs are forgettable, but not terrible; they lack true originality that would set them apart. (CR)
(Retro Futurist)

WHAT TYRANTS – "Hanging Out In Havana/Far Out"

A perfectly fucked and caveman-basic surf riff drives the bashing punk of "Hanging Out In Havana" and it's a wonderful thing to hear. Repetitive and fueled by way too many pills. "Far Out" takes a step down in terms of speed, but the slurred, nearly drooled-out vox and all-punk attack still win in the end. WHAT TYRANTS, please tell me who you are and where I can purchase your lovely records! (MC)
(no info)

WINTER COFFIN – "Forest of Blitzkrieg" 7"

Memphis duo who make second wave black metal. Hailing from Memphis, TN it's clear these two like lo-fi, stripped down early BURZUM and maybe even a little DARKTHRONE. What you have here is a one-sided 7" with a really nice etching on the B-side. The A-side is one track—"Forest of Blitzkrieg"—and it is stripped down simple black metal. Drums are simple, guitars play distorted, but catchy tremolo picking. I know they probably prefer to think of themselves as grim, but this seems like a labor of love and it seems like they are enjoying themselves. This is the only track this band will likely release and there is an interesting story as one of the members of this two person band was Jay Lindsey—a.k.a. Jay Reatard. Solid track. (MH)
(Blak Skul)

WORKING POOR U.S.A. – "Working Poor" EP

Maybe they should find better jobs or further ways to supplement their income? Maybe they shouldn't spring for the oxblood Docs or should have gone for the domestic pint? A working man's troubles in 2015. Blasting out of the rough council flats of Cape Cod come these fine yobs spitting out tough street rock similar to LIMECELL and the WRETCHED ONES. With lyrics like "I ain't left, I ain't right, I stand in the middle with my boys here tonight" it's hard not to raise a well-callused fist skyward at times. Unfortunately, for the most part, they come out flat and generic like the dregs of your pint. Not to be discouraging, though. Keep up the hard work, men, and I look forward to future releases. (RO)
(Street Rock)

THE WYCH ELM – "Mother Bark Spit" LP

I'm confused but in a super chill, cool way. The first song is an up-tempo, lo-fi, pop punk song. It isn't terrible, but it's kind of boring, the vocals are monotone. Then they bring in some amateur synthesizer and it gets way better. Then the third song has even more amateur synthesizer and it's a bit droning and it starts to sound like an '80s pop song but with a certain amount of punk energy. Unfortunately, they revert back to pop punk for most of the record except for the second to last song. It's mellow, no drums, very pretty, dual female/male vocals—it sounds like something you would go to sleep to and have great dreams. There should be way more of this. This might not be the greatest record but this band could be on track to do some really cool things. (PA)
(self-released)

YDI – "A Place in the Sun / Black Dust" 2xLP

By now it should be fairly common knowledge to readers of this magazine that YDI's *A Place in the Sun* 7" is godhead among raw, uncompromising, early-to-mid '80s hardcore savagery. Just look up videos of the band from that era, if you have a doubt. This double LP collection contains everything the band recorded; the previously mentioned *A Place in the Sun*, the 1983 demo, *Get Off My Back* compilation tracks, and 1985's *Black Dust* LP, as well as an unreleased track from the LP session. The demo is an earlier version of all ten 7" tracks plus five additional songs, and as expected are cruder examples of the fury...but not by much. The non-7" songs are as good as all the rest. The same can be said of the comp tracks, with "Enemy for Life," showing as arguably YDI's sickest track, while "I Killed My Family" shows its dirgy, metallic face and acts as a pre-cursor to the LP. *Black Dust*, while still containing the might of the earlier material, really pulled back the throttle and attacks on a sort of slow-grind, slasher movie, thudding menace with a much more rock'n'roll type edge and functions more as a metal record than hardcore punk. A cool collection with a nice booklet, but I'd really like to know what Dave Grohl thinks before I make up my mind. (JU)
(Southern Lord)

YOUR PEST BAND – "In My Doom" 10"

I saw these dudes from Japan once in Chattanooga, and I really only remember a few things about it. The guitarist was pretty wasted and ended up playing BLACK FLAG riffs for like thirty minutes and they got scared pretty easily by someone who wanted to have sex with them. That's all I got from that night. Sorry. This record, though, is much more memorable. Forget the fact that I *still* can't tell if the first song is on the wrong speed or not—these guys are laying down some pretty great feeling shit. At times angry '70s punk, an occasional tip of the hat to ROLLING STONES, more grunge than they would like to admit, kinda super sweet lyrics, and it seems pretty timeless, actually. Super rocking, and not a stinker in the bunch. That shit ain't easy. (DZ)
(HS!BF / Snuffy Smiles)

YOUR PEST BAND – "Time to Go" LP

I don't know what to hate more, BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN or getting older!?! A combination of the two has ruined so many awesome pop punk bands. Well, *ruined* is a pretty harsh term to use in this case, cause this record is still super good. Around 2008 or 2009

YOUR PEST BAND put out a few brilliant 7"s that immediately vaulted them to the upper echelons of Japanese pop punk. Their songs were fast, catchy, sloppy, manic, and could set the room on fire. Yet, as they developed as a band they cooled their jets and took on a more "rock'n'roll" approach to songwriting. Sure, the quality of the songs has improved, the recording is done better, and their musical range is far deeper. But you just don't get that throwing-a-lit-match-onto-gasoline feeling you did from their earlier stuff. Now instead of being an "out of control punk band" they are a "dynamic rock'n'roll band with lots of punk elements." If you're a fan of Japanese pop punk, you probably know about Snuffy Smiles. And you know that you can always count of them to put out nothing but awesome records. This record is no different. Killer songs from beginning to end, but this time with less mosh pit. (FS)
(Snuffy Smiles)

ZERO – "The Mirror/Love Ends"

Man, this is a tough one. It's fucking really well written and really well played, but it's just so transparently a JUDGEMENT tribute that I have a hard time assessing it on its own merits and not comparing it to one of the very best hardcore bands of all time and finding it lacking in that regard. They've got so much going for them in terms of the catchy melodies, the elaborate intros, the tough vocals and huge gang choruses...but it's all so JUDGEMENT (and to a lesser extent BASTARD and DEATH SIDE) derived that it kind of feels like cheating. It's admirable that any band can even get to the point where they credibly imitate those bands, but what ZERO needs now is to mix up their song structures a bit and try to craft an identity that doesn't rely quite so heavily on the trademark song writing elements of their influences. I know they can do it, these guys are obviously extremely talented and I'm sure that will come with time. "Love Ends" is a hell of a song, one of the best I've heard from an American band this year, it just owes too much to other musicians' work to be truly great. I can't wait to hear a record from ZERO where I can say, "that's 100% ZERO and it's fucking awesome." (AU)
(self-released, no info)

V/A – "Positive Creed Fanzine Sampler #26" CD

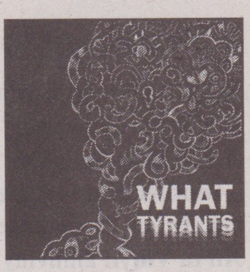
This comes with the same-named zine I reviewed in this issue. There are 22 bands on this One of my first fave tracks was the "NWOBHM meets L7" sound of MAID OF ACE. Also, RASH DECISION's full-on, pissed off crossover is fantastic, especially the dual vocals which reminded me of NAUSEA. Also of note: POG make Billy Braggish strummy pop with pretty backing vocals. Mellow? Indeed but trust me—it's quite good! DR. AND THE CRIPPENS rise from the grave with a pretty cool DAMNED-style jam. DAVE PARSONS' tune is straight-up '70s power-pop with a weird chorus that sounds like the SCORPIONS?!? I dunno, this just kind works since the THIN LIZZY-ish dual harmonies take it over. The two women singing in NINE BULLETS are super talented as they do some incredible vocal harmonies like ICON A.D. or CHIN CHIN albeit in a more traditional early '80s/anarcho-punk way. The BURNT TAPES are melodic and anthemic à la HOT WATER MUSIC or AVAIL—some really strong melodies on vocals on this one. HEAVY DRAPES come off like the REPLACEMENTS crossed with HANOI ROCKS and that's a really good thing. In all, this comp could've done with a few less bands but it's nice—I suppose they try to focus on as many unheard/lesser known bands as they could at once. (JD)
(Positive Creed)

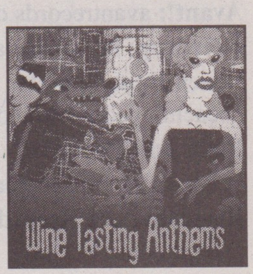
V/A – "Puke and Destroy 2" EP

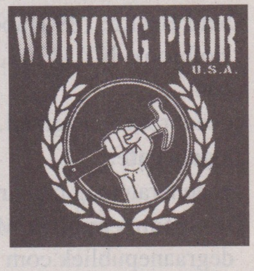
This record came out in 2013 and I don't know why we're getting it just now, but here it is. GLEAM GARDEN are from Japan and have a slight CLASH feel... super tight song with a real catchy chorus and kinda bouncy music. Their song, "It Smelled Good" is definitely the best song on side A. WHAT-A-NIGHT'S are also from Japan and play a weird cross between BLINK-182-style pop punk and early TENEMENT-style rock. Their song "Cry for Nothing" has an almost prog feel to it. TENEMENT throws out two songs that are a little rawer sounding than their current stuff, but still carry the unmistakable charm that band always seem to exude. They haven't really put out anything bad, which is saying a lot for any group. HOLY SHIT! breaks out of the pop shell that dominates this disc and hits you in the face with two of their manic hardcore blasts. It's not the best shit I've heard from them, but with a band that has written well over 100 songs, it's far, far from the worst. A great addition to HOLY SHIT'S vast catalog. (GH)
(Snuffy Smiles)

V/A – "Wine Tasting Anthems" CD

People still put out comps? Well this Rexi Bea clothing store in Paso Robles does. A collection of California "central coast" bands. A mix of hardcore, '77 Punk, rock'n'roll punk…twenty tracks with some bands having more than one track. I'm not nuts about this personally but if you know these bands or this store you'd better buy it and support the scene. "A" for effort. (RL)
(Rexi Bea)







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1859: 1859records.bandcamp.com, 1859.storeenvy.com
A Kid Who Tells On Another Kid Is A Dead Kid: akidwhotellsonanotherkidisadeadkid.com
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Almost Ready: almostreadyrecords.com
Avant!: avantrecords.com
Beerdrop: beerdrop.bandcamp.com
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Crust or Die: crustordie.blogspot.com
Dead Broke: 139 Huber Ave., Holbrook, NY 11741, deadbrokerecords.com, deadbrokerec@gmail.com
Degenerate: degeneratemag.bigcartel.com
De Graanrepubliek Music Shop: degraanepubliek.com
Dirt Cult: dirtcultrecords.com
Dirty Hippy Barn Records: 2576 N. Holton St., Milwaukee, WI 53212
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Distro-y Records: distroyrecords.com
Don Gatto: dongatto.bandcamp.com
Drunken Sailor: drunkensailorrecords.org
Erste Theke Tontrager: erstetheketontraeger.blogspot.com, vaukajott@gmx.de
Ethel Scull: screature.bandcamp.com
Exabrupto: facebook.com/exabrupto.distro
Exes With Benefits: exeswithbenefits.com
Fat Wreck Chords: 2196 Palou Ave., San Francisco, CA 94124, fatwreck.com
Florida's Dying / Total Punk: floridasdying.com, floridasdyingrecords@gmail.com
Frog Manchu: myspace.com/frogmanchurecords
Going Underground Records: 1312 19th St., Bakersfield, CA 93301
Goner: goner-records.com
Grow Your Own: anthrax_uk@hotmail.com
Gunner: gunnerrecords.com
Halo of Flies: 3444 N Bremen Street, Milwaukee, WI, haloofflies records.com
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Hot: chimerapunx.bandcamp.com
HS!BF: hsbfrecords.com
Kizmiaz Records: kizmiazrecords.bandcamp.com, kizmiazrecords@gmail.com
La Vida Es Un Mus: 2 Cazenove Rd, London N16 6BD, UK, lavidaesunmus.com
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Load Records: loadrecords.com
Lost Cat: PO Box 2121, Saint Cloud, MN 56304, lostcatrecords.org
Magnetic South: magneticsouthrecordings.org
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Me Time: facebook.com/metimetheband
Muscle Horse: wearemusclehorse.com, bosses@wearemusclehorse.com
NE!: nerecords.se
Negative Fun Records: PO Box 97212, Raleigh, North Carolina 27624, negativefun.com
Nightrider: nightriderrecords@gmail.com
Norton: P.O. Box 646 Cooper Station NYNY 10276, nortonrecords.com
Not Like You: 102 Richmond Ave SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106 notlikeyourecords.com, notlikeyouzine@gmail.com
PDV Records: pdv.com.hr
Pleistocene Records: pleistoceneband.bandcamp.com
Podrophonia: podrophenia.podbean.com
Positive Creed Fanzine: P.O. Box 777, EX1 9TU, Exeter, UK
Radikal 1977: radikal1977.com
Reagent: reagentrecords@mail.com, reagentrecords.bigcartel.com
Red Lounge: redloungerecords.de
Red Scare: redscare.net
Retro Futurist: PO Box 22423, Savannah, GA 31405, retrofuturistrecords.com
Rexi Bea Music: rexibea.com
Rotting Head: rottingheadrecords@gmail.com
Rural Isolation Project: ruralisolationproject.com
Sacramento Records: 331 21st St., Sacramento, CA 95811
Salongplay: salongplayrecords.bandcamp.com
Scarecrow Sonic Boombox: 1300 Seminole Ave, Metairie, LA 70005, ssboombox@gmail.com
Secret Mission Records: secretmissionrecords.com
Shithammer: shithammer@hotmail.com
Shock To The System Records: 19 Grant Ave, Albany, NY 12206-1613
Snuffy Smile Records: 12-A Kamikousaicho, Shichiku Kita-Ru, JAPAN
Spacecase Records: info@spacecaserecords.com
SquidHat Records: 848 N. Rainbow Blvd. #889, Las Vegas, NV 89107, squidhatrecords.com
Ss Records: 1809 S Street #101-276, Sacramento, CA 95811, ss@s-srecords.com, s-srecords.tumblr.com
Street Rock Records: streetrockrecords.com
Super Fi Records: superfirecords.co.uk
Tadpole Records: tadpolerecords.blogspot.co.uk
Triple B: 23 Bay State Rd. Boston MA 02215 triple-brecords.com, triplebrecords@yahoo.com
Vinyl Smash Records: vinylsmash.com
Violence Creeps: violencecreeps.bandcamp.com
Voodoo Rhythm: voodoorhythm.com
Zaxxon Records: zaxxon.ca

DEMOS

Send cassettes and CD-Rs to: MRR Attn: Demos, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. CD-Rs with no artwork will not be considered. Reviews by Matt Badenhop, Heather Blotto, Greg Harvester, Sean Nieves-Quiñones, and Alex Turner.

ATAXXIA – Heavy and crusty hardcore from Minneapolis. Stacey's vocals are shrill with a little delay effect, which doesn't quite complement the heavy and metallic quality of the music as much as I'd wish. I am glad, however, that the vocals are not just blown to hell like so many other bands of this style. There's a bit of '90s crust like STATE OF FEAR, or maybe some Euro stuff coming to mind here. Tape comes housed in a 3M static shielding bag (which conveniently has the words "discharge shielding" printed on it). (Matt) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, providedrailroad@gmail.com)

BAD FUTURE – Recently, I went to see a band from Austria that I was excited about and then ended up being bowled over by Seattle's BAD FUTURE instead. (I saw the Austrian band too. They were good.) This four-song tape does a great job of capturing the live energy of the band. I could make reference points like melodic, dark and raw, but it just doesn't feel like enough. They're playing with the same kind of intensity and drive of TENEMENT, but without the overt pop elements (but still catchy). The whole band has a next-level tightness that cannot be denied. Half sung/half screamed vocals. I don't know, man. I don't have your fucking reference points, but I will tell you that this tape is great and if you like heavily-riffed guitar-driven gruff punk shit, you want this. (Greg) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, dirtcultrecords.com)

BASEMENT FAMILY – It seems that Not Normal Tapes has really tapped into the Lansing, Michigan underground scene with this month's slew of releases. BASEMENT FAMILY does a blend of different styles from indie rock to shoegazey stuff, but with psych elements. Good hooks do pop up here and there, but there's a lot of space in between them. The overall tone is a bit dreamy and druggy, if you're into that sorta thing. (Matt) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, notnormaltapes@gmail.com)

BRAZILIAN WAX – *Rip It Off* – Wow. Super raw, angry, and minimalist punk. I know there's a problem with bands with women members constantly being compared to "riot grrrl" bands whether it's warranted or not. So, with that in mind, this band definitely draws influences from true riot grrrl (s)heroes like SLEATER-KINNEY and HUGGY BEAR. Something about this reminds me that punk is (used to be?) kind of about putting your ugliest underbelly on show for everyone to see, only to find out that it's actually really cool and everyone is excited that you had the courage to share it. Fuzzed-out guitar with clean bass leads give the recording an '80s sound. The vocals alternate between pretty and angry screaming, which manages to somehow stay melodic. The rage and frustration carry through. The track "L.C.D." is a total sleeper streetpunk anthem. Definitely danceable. Includes a WIPERS cover. (Heather) (10-song CD-R, lyrics not included, brazilianwaxrocks@gmail.com, brazilianwaxpgh.bandcamp.com)

THE BUG – *What's Buggin' You?* – Hardcore from more of a noize than music perspective, but without the usual derivative aesthetics. Frantic drumming and chaotic guitars rule this. There's a tightness in the playing that controls the chaos, but this does not detract from its effectiveness. Nice layout, though I can't stand the long run-on-sentence-styled lyric sheet. Lacking a bit in hooks for me, but totally raging. (Matt) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, notnormaltapes@gmail.com)

BUTANNA – In their short-ish existence, I've already seen this Oakland band cycle through a few drummers and a second guitarist. Despite that, the band sounds confident and top-notch on their first tape. They play straightforward, catchy punk with charismatic, soaring vocals. Their singer Vanessa sometimes takes on a snarly Mia Zapata-like drawl that sets this band apart from others of this style. Also, every player here is just solid as hell, including memorable bass lines that rival those of the BANANAS (if you're a fan, you know that is really saying something). They cover "I Feel Alright" by the STOOGES (listed on their tape as a DAMNED song, but corrected on their bandcamp), which takes a certain amount of either confidence or naiveté to pull off successfully. I'll choose the former and they destroy that song in the best way. Two thumbs up. "Don't push me. I'll fucking kill you." (Greg) (7-song tape, lyrics included, butanna.bandcamp.com)

CHUD – This cassingle has the exact same packaging as the GLOW GOD tape I reviewed. Both songs here are semi-driving punk songs with a bit of swagger in the guitar and an overall emphasis on the "rock'n'roll." I sense a bit of Midwestern fuckery (they are in fact from Lansing) which adds a little flavor. Probably a good time live, but these two tracks don't seem like hits to me. (Matt) (2-song cassette, lyrics not included, notnormaltapes@gmail.com)

DIFFERENT METHODS – This New Orleans trio plays garage rock that seems to be in a constant push and pull between melody and discord. I'm not a huge garage fan, but I'm into the subtle toy keyboards underneath the melodic guitar leads, giving way into harder-edged power chord sections. The fuzzy tuneless vocals sit awkwardly, but not ineffectively, on top of the consonant chord structures. The third and last tune is an acoustic number inspired by Stax Records blues singer MABLE JOHN that dips into audio collage with her song, "No Love." (Sean) (3-song cassette, lyrics not included, subject1.bandcamp.com, turnuptuneout@hotmail.com, 716-449-7396, 2019 Burgundy St Apt A, New Orleans, LA 70116)

DREGS – I heard that this band's mission statement was something like "Taking a chainsaw to the cock forest that is UK hardcore" and I'm in full support if they're going to approach it this viciously. Defying the usual breakneck thrust of conventional hardcore, DREGS crawls along at points (by hardcore standards), throttled forward by vocals that sound so damaged, ugly, defiant, pissed, raw and real as fuck. The guitar sounds like the same sort of "fuck you" tone that made that G.L.O.S.S. demo so outstanding. Such a fucking stellar demo. This is the reason you still like punk. Get this and/or get out. Members of GOOD THROB and WOOLF, but those are not reference points. It's more like "These people know what the fuck they're doing." (Greg) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, wearemusclehorse.com)

THE DRIP – Full disclosure: I picked this demo up for review only because it has radiation symbols on it. Treble laden, feedback-laced hardcore/D-beat from Pennsylvania that is fast and raw as fuck. The whole thing is four minutes long and dumb as a box of rocks in the best way possible. This band sounds like they jumped out of a time machine from 1987 but hasn't even thought about crossover yet. Get it. (Greg) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, thatsthedrip.bandcamp.com)

GANG NAILS – GANG NAILS is keeping the dream of Troubleman Records alive and well in this day and age. Here are four songs that smack of the surfy sass and destructo noise punk of the early 2000s. These guys sent in a 3-inch CD-r for review a few months ago, full of pitch shifted multilayered guitars and frenetic drumming. This new tape doesn't move too much away from that sound, but tempers it with a dancier and more melodic edge (including a SUICIDE cover). I think they'd find a lot of fellowship with Brooklyn, NY's UNSTOPPABLE DEATH MACHINES. The art is understated yet effective, displaying a bisected astronaut on either side of the j-card. Both sides of the tape itself are imprinted SIDE A. I don't know if *MRR* will print a winky emoticon, but just feel it in your hearts. (Sean) (4-song tape, lyrics not included, supernauttapeco.bandcamp.com, Supernaut Tape Co, 3620 Marathon #325, Los Angeles, CA 90026)

GLOW GOD – A very slow and plodding cassingle with a wraparound sleeve/obi strip-style package. The fairly monotonous and mellow first two minutes of "Yellow Belly" mildly explode into a chorus at the end, but it still leaves me bored. "Master Of Idiots" on the flip has sort of a '90s grunge-rock vibe. Pretty uneventful. (Matt) (2-song cassette, lyrics not included, glowgodok@gmail.com)

GUTTERSNIPE – One of the best bands I've ever seen! Queer absurdist no wave noise rock abstract freak out. This is hard bop right here. Gretchen and Rob spew violent oscillating noise via guitar drums and electronics. You can clearly hear Gretchen's love of black metal in her guitar playing, but it has evolved into something greater and deeper and beautiful and more ugly than could be contained in that genre (not unlike what Vanessa from STILLSUIT/SISTER FUCKER/COUGHS/BLACK DOG does with her love of death metal). Some would listen to this and think there is no structure or that it might be improvised, but they'd be wrong; GUTTERSNIPE are just on the next level of cut-and-paste, fingers-in-the-blender songwriting. Rob attacks the drums without hesitation, lanky limbs multiply into octopus tentacles, delayed snare and kick-triggered sounds bounce back and forth, adding to the seeming chaos of Gretchen's affected howls and guitar shredding, rolling on the ground in the noise. Lyrics are body/flower horror

cut-and-paste just like the music, recalling the approach of Jenny Falk of Scotland's DIVORCE. I could easily see them on a bill with SBSM. As far as sonic references, think LIGHTNING BOLT but way better, the earliest most damaged output of Oakland's KIT, or SEDIMENT CLUB but even more fucked sounding. This CD comes wrapped in an original silkscreened magic eye on newsprint, given as a clue to the lyrics of closer track "Long Pincers Dips In The Tin." Don't miss this. (Sean) (6-song CD-R, lyrics included, guttersnipe.bandcamp.com, arcanepariahrecords@yahoo.co.uk, arcanepariahrecords.webeden.co.uk, 110 Burley Lodge Rd, Leeds LS6 1QF UNITED KINGDOM)

THE HOLY RALAI LAMA – This was sent in along with the GANG NAILS tape, and they could not be sonically further from one another! It reminds me of '90s Slumberland bands—it's just very '90s in general. Like, I swear to god, I hallucinated Calvin Johnson's voice during the intro of track two, "Kamikaze Pilot Girl." There are lots of overblown guitar leads intersecting with vocal melodies, and thick, churning power chords that carry the songs along like a distorted shanty. At its best, the sound recalls HALO BENDERS, SWIRLIES or even WEEZER, but veers into the territory of other, less distinguishable alt-rock/indie of the decade. The songs feel long. For some, it is a gift; for others, not so much. (Sean) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, supernauttapeco.bandcamp.com, Supernaut Tape Co, 3620 Marathon #325, Los Angeles, CA 90026)

LIFELINE LOST – *No Room For Hate* – This is a full-length CD release from Helsinki-based pop punk rockers LIFELINE LOST. The performance is super tight and the recording sounds very pro. The songs stick to the mid-tempo dramatic pop punk style with minor chord progressions, frequent breakdowns, and plenty of sing-along choruses. Multiple guitar leads are super catchy and hold the songs together. The vocals are mixed pretty high and do some acrobatic about-to-lose-it-near-the-end-of-his-vocal-range maneuvers, in the style of RVIVR or early FLESHIES. The lyrics are in English and seem like they are political but are also really vague. The songs are catchy, passionate and sincere. The recording might benefit from being a little dirtier—music this heartfelt somehow seems to lose some of its credibility when it's too clean. I bet they are really something else to see live. (Heather) (11-song CD-R, lyrics included, lifelinelostband@gmail.com, facebook.com/lifelinelost)

THE LIPPIES – A band that's been around for less than a year and they have a solid sound. Pop punk, more in the vein of melodic punk bands like MASSHYSTERI or early TERRIBLE FEELINGS. Not re-inventing anything here, but I bet I'd go to every show they played if I lived in Grand Rapids. For fans of current bands like ZEITGIEST or the NERVOUS. (Alex) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, Let's Go Do Some Crime, 6 Jefferson St, Grand Rapids, MI 49503, thelippies.bandcamp.com)

MANNEQUIN – Two quirky and dance-y tunes backed by a simple electronic drum beat. Rhythmically pleasing guitar and bass lines weave in and out with a soft-spoken vocal approach. Expertly-crafted songs executed in a unique way. Format gripe: what the fuck is up with all these cassingles? Please don't let them become a trend! (Matt) (2-song cassette, lyrics not included, notnormaltapes@gmail.com)

NASTY DILEMMA – My first impression of NASTY DILEMMA was walking into a bar in San Francisco and encountering an almost silent space. The band was playing a very quiet song and the whole room was watching in a respectful, almost-dead silence. For anyone who has ever tried to play quiet music in a space populated by drunks and assholes, you know that this is no small feat and I respect them for being able to bring that energy to a room. NASTY DILEMMA is a newer Bay Area band and they play slow, moody, dark, beautiful music that is more in line with KATE BUSH, COCTEAU TWINS and 4AD Records than DIY punk. The vocals are sung in a pleasant lilt that sometimes reminds me of the more somber moments from DOGJAW and the whole thing feels contemplative. As this band progresses, I can picture the songs becoming more lush and epic (and possibly not reviewable by this mag's standards), but this is an excellent demo and a great start. (Greg) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, atopacrumblingmount@gmail.com)

NO NEGATIVE – One droning and echo-y track followed by an instrumental. Some nice melodies and ideas, and they sure like using their pedals, but this feels like it never reaches fruition. I like the way this band sounds but I can't understand why anyone would just do a cassingle of this! They could have just waited to have enough strong material for an EP or album. I'm becoming terrified of living in a world up to our knees in ancient promo fodder mostly consisting of cassingles and flexi-discs. (Matt) (2-song cassette, lyrics not included, notnormaltapes@gmail.com)

OUAIS / SECRET PAPER MOON – *split* – Two melodic Pittsburgh bands show off their tunes. SECRET PAPER MOON projects fuzzy open chords over a plodding floor tom with tuneless crooning vocals not unlike BEAT HAPPENING or the VELVET UNDERGROUND. OUAIS, on the other hand, are a garage rock duo that also sound like I HATE MYSELF sometimes, which is a really weird combo that I'm not sure has been done before. (Sean) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, secretpapermoon.bandcamp.com, secretpapermoon@gmail.com, ouais.bandcamp.com, dotdotdashpgh.bandcamp.com, 920 Penn St. Pittsburgh, PA 15215)

PLASTIC CAVES – This darkwave punk recording comes at you with everything all at once. The vocals sound both panicked and restrained, channeling a little bit of CHRISTIAN DEATH but definitely not stopping there. Super tight and creative dance beat drumming keeps the songs cohesive, while pretty much everyone else in the band is going off on a sick mutually complementary tangent. Synth and well-mixed, well-placed samples keep things fresh. In the current wave of punk darkwave revival, it seems like most of the bands doing it are actually nailing it super hard and there's no room to talk shit. This band is no exception. (Heather) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, dsix.bandcamp.com)

RAW PONY – Yo, the drummer of this band just plays a floor tom and a snare drum, which is a totally sick style! No cymbals! Fuck cymbals! Simple three chord, fuzzed-out garage punk in the vein of the more upbeat CRAMPS songs, but imagine a punked out Leslie Gore singing instead of Lux Interior. I mean, kind of!! The tape has perfect blown-out, swampy, basement style production. It's so blown-out, in fact, that one of the guitars sounds like a saxophone! This shit is cool! More gold from Ohio. (Greg) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, 1391 W 5th Ave. #368, Columbus, OH 43212, rawponyoh@gmail.com)

SALOME'S DANCE / SIERPIEN – *split* – SALOME'S DANCE have sharp, breathy vocal bleats, kinda goth, but could also fit in at a smoky normal person rock bar. Felt like one song had a punk edge, but that was the PART 1 cover. SIERPIEN fall somewhere between straight '80s goth and that Polish punk stuff that went alternative instead of new wave (I'm thinking Klaus Mitfoch or Lech Janerka, but that's probably pretty random, no?). Both bands are good, but I wanted both bands to blow me away. (Robert) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, occultwhispers.bigcartel.com)

SHORT LEASH – As an accompaniment for this tape, you'll wanna fill a super soaker with Mad Dog 20/20, give someone a face tattoo, drink your friend's fucking piss and take turns punching each other in the face until someone passes out. Degenerate, wasted, fucked up, raw hardcore/fastcore from the shithole (said affectionately) known as New Orleans. The singer trades off between screaming shit like "Kill A Christian" and going off on Mike Muir "Institutionalized"-style rants. The band holds shit down and sometimes launches into WHAT HAPPENS NEXT-speed onslaughts that will make you reconsider the abilities of wastoids. I realize I'm sounding sarcastic, but this tape fucking rips. See you fucks at St Roch's one day. (Greg) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, snortbleach@gmail.com, shortleashsnortbleach.bandcamp.com)

TECHNICAL ECSTASY – *Rehearsal* – Three songs recorded at practice. This basement band's practice tape sounds punk, like that band you saw last night and were a little too drunk to remember the details of, but you're sure that you enjoyed it. Lo-fi jams that are a little sloppy and muddled on this tape, but give 'em some time in a "studio" and these will be songs you yell along to on your bike, going to the sweet swimming spot just outside of town. (Alex) (3-song cassette, lyrics not included, pictureofthefuture@gmail.com)

UROCHROMES – UROCHROMES come from somewhere out in the wilds of Western Mass and they sound part robot, part human. Cold, stark drums pound out a beat that takes me to a dark place in my mind that remembers *early* MINISTRY. Thick, distorted guitars pull me out of that haze and walk a line between early punk, US hardcore and some hints of all that weird shit that's going on currently in Northwest Indiana. My personal favorite song on here is "I Don't Wanna Be Like Me", which is straightforward and catchy as fuck….like a summertime-hit style punk anthem. It has some traces of LUMPY happening, but Western Mass is its own weird zone and claims allegiance to no one. Excellent tape. I listened to it four times in a row already. (Greg) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, gutfreak.storeenvy.com)

V/A – *Suicide Bong Mix Tape / Philly's Dopest Shit Vol. 1* – An extremely dense comp of Philly bands. Forty-four, to be exact. Virtually every style of punk, metal, and underground rock or pop is featured here. I like that these comps exist, but I usually don't get turned on to any new bands that I like. The only band on here I knew about before was SGNLS, and they're still the only one I care to know. This is not to say that the bands on here are bad—most are really great. I know more dope shit from Philly that ain't on here. But please, don't let my snobbish tastes affect your judgement. It's a totally worthwhile project and deserves due credit. (Matt) (44-song cassette, lyrics not included, suicidebongtapes.bandcamp.com)

WET DREAMS – Burly and distorted mid-tempo hardcore. Sounds quite a lot like a modern-production take on BLACK FLAG, just as they were easing into *My War* territory, but with less fucked guitar leads. Vocals are distorted and wild and growly in nature, but not really in a compelling way. No info about them on the J-card or internet. Oh well. (Matt) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, no contact info)

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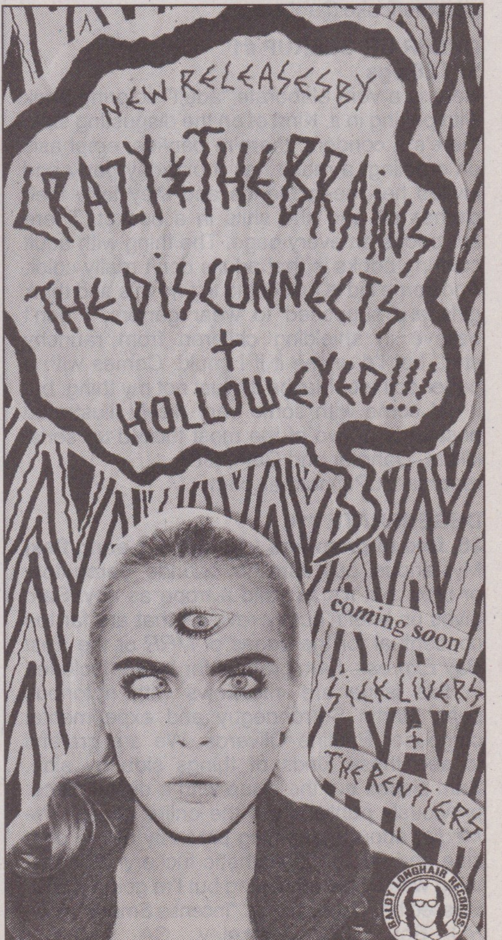


ZINES

Send zines for review to: ***MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146.*** *Please include the following info on a separate piece of paper with your zine: postpaid price, international price, if you take trades, number of pages, language, mailing address, website address, and email address.*

Reviewers:
(AP) Ari Perezdiez
(DG) Dan Goetz
(DZ) Ryan Modee
(EC) E. Conner
(EW) Eli Wald
(GA) Grace Ambrose
(JB) Julia Booz
(JD) Justin Davisson
(JM) Jeff Mason
(KC) Kyle Canyon
(LA) Lydia Athanasopoulos
(MM) Marissa Magic
(MR) Mikey Minicomix
(OG) Oscar Gutierrez

CEMETERY GATES #1
$5 / 27 pgs
The intro to *Cemetery Gates* claims there are no other zines focusing on cemeteries and death culture which I kind of view as a slap in the face to at least 25% of teenage goths. The formatting is functional, the pictures of graves have embarrassing commentary captions. There is one brief article about the death rituals of German Baptists that features weird and confusing grammar (I'm one to talk) but no real in-depth information. There is an interview with a mortician that could have gone farther and then a few people share grief rituals written in different fonts. This seems like a first timer, there is room for improvement. (MM)
missmuffcake@aol.com

CHEER UP, SEERUP #1
$7 / 28 pgs
Here is a very elaborate "adult" coloring book with puking in it. Kind of on the disgusting side, there's a condom, there're panties, emphasis on drooling, a rabbit has a birthday party and invites her mean friends and they take their clothes off and she shits in a bucket. There are boobs on every page. The thing with adult coloring books is that adults don't really color. And some kid is just going to find this and think girls are supposed to wear garters. I don't believe in shielding children from raunchy stuff, but I'd unsee it if I could. Comes with a paper doll too. Maybe it's just not my thing, but it did come with some very nicely illustrated postcards of two of the most fucked up serial killers, Dahmer and Gein. (JB)
repomanJLP@hotmail.com

DEGENERATE #16
$5, free to prisoners / 16 pgs & 2-song flexi
Mysterious guy fanzine sounds derogatory or bitter but it's as valid a trope as any. Sam gives us brief'n'quirky reviews that are far too conceptual for the pages of *MRR* or the *East Bay Express*. I am grateful for these. Included in this issue are interviews with notorious punk Martin Sorrondeguy and experimental composer Pauline Oliveros. We are grateful to see these kinds of things side by side. Sam closes out the issue with a digital piece, previously published in the online "mag" *The Media*, about the lasting precarity of the print zine and uh...um...aesthetic fuckery. This last thing was a little confusing but I'm going with it. Blessed be. Thanksgiving. *Incense Smoke*. (EC)
PO Box 3272, Berkeley, CA 94703 / sdlefebvre@gmail.com

EXPEDITE DEATH #4
$3.50 / 25 pgs
A very crust/D-beat focused zine with Canada's Massgrave (who I always confuse with Stockholmsmangel act, Massgrav). Coincidentally they also interview Massgrave the same-named band from Japan (which I guess is the crust equivalent of 1984-era metal zines interviewing Slayer (Orange County) and Slayer (San Antonio). Format-wise this is typed and photocopied so it looks like a zine from any point in the last several decades. Also in here are Swedish crustoids, Crutches who deal with religion in the context of war and their hometown of Malmö. The Bay Area band Femacoffin is featured here which reminds me that they're ex-members of Stormcrow and Abandon (the first who I saw a bunch at Gilman at the Metro in the mid-00's and the latter I have a 7" by somewhere in my apt). Anyhow, I liked that they asked the band about the significance of their name where they seemed to get into specifics instead of going in, say, an Alex Jones direction. Also in here is a short but significant write-up from the works of Peter Kropotkin called "The State Cannot Exist Without Society." Then they interview Disgust (Japan) and UK D-beaters Deadly Reign, as well as more Svenska blow-out crust from Heavy Nukes, one of whose members plays in Swede power metallers, Rocka Rollas, go figure. Overall, a short and direct read but a good place to catch up on the crust/D-beat scene. Also my copy came with a color printed Disorder poster which I hope is the same for you, as it's a nice treat. (Justin)
expediteddeath@hotmail.com / expeditedeath.blogspot.com

FIFTH ESTATE
$4, free to prisoners / Summer 2015
Happy 50th (!) anniversary to *Fifth Estate*. To commemorate, there's a section looking back at the Vietnam War. A longer piece brings out many of the gory details, along with the shameful denials, excuses, and lies used by prominent Americans. As a quick primer, this is fine. Another article specifically looks at the stories of returning US soldiers being spit on upon arrival. The author's written a book on this subject, and he demonstrates (to the extent possible—he allows that something along these lines may have occurred somewhere) that no such event was ever documented. Further, these stories pre-date the American involvement in Vietnam, having appeared in years earlier in France and Germany after those countries lost wars. A Chinese woman, whose father managed a factory in Saigon in the early-mid 1970s, describes the aftermath of the war on her family. "[O]ne thing the Communists were expert at, even better than contorting dialectics...was at squeezing money." Here in the present, a visitor to Turkey examines the extent to which the Kurdistan Workers Party (known by its Kurdish initials, PKK) has become a more radical organization. He identifies a militia offshoot of the PKK with men's and women's divisions which resisted an advance by the Islamic State in Syria (ISIS) on the town of Rojava. The author claims the women's group works against repressive aspects of the dominant Kurdish culture. This is not an in-depth report, but provides people with some spots to investigate further. In light of the changing situation in Cuba, an article looks at the past struggles and repression of the anarchist movement there. It's always been disappointing to me when Cuba and Venezuela get a pass on their shitty police states just 'cuz they won't play ball with the US. John Zerzan contributes a piece, and his debate with a transhumanist at Stanford University is recapped by an attendee. Who fucking cares about this guy? Transhumanism is also bullshit—it's a scheme for rich people to become robots and live forever, but they say everyone will get to do it. At least this stuff doesn't take up much space. There are obituaries, book reviews, a letters column, zero advertisements, and an interview with the editor of *Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements*. In general I'm vehemently anti-fiction, but after reading this issue I had to moderate my position. Overall, there's enough quality material here for me to think the $4 asking price is fair. (JM)
PO Box 201016, Ferndale, MI 48220 / fifthestate.org

GINGER BINGE #1
$4 / 44 pgs
Ode to ginger beers and ales, with reviews that say things like "citric notes" coupled with well-rendered illustrations of the bottles and their labels. Includes a bit of history, health benefits (relieves flatulence!), and some cocktail recipes as well as recommended reading. I never knew this much could be said about ginger. (JB)
studiumpunctumshop@gmail.com

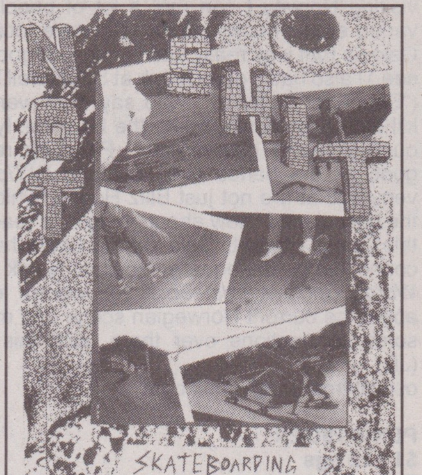
KING-CAT COMICS #75
$5 / 48 pgs
A very nice and sweet story about author John's cat, Maisie who he had for over a decade. As an owner of cats (or is that the other way around?) for much of my life I can really relate to this. The art is filled with very simple pen and ink line drawings. Stylistically speaking this looks sort of like a more minimal version of *Snakepit* (as in Ben Snakepit, not the ultra-nerdy French metal zine). However, this doesn't take away from the way he illustrates emotions and expressions. The story is of Maisie and John's journey with her goes from Denver to Illinois. This also wonderfully illustrates a lot of the weird/funny things that cats do like wrap around your shoulders and neck or sit on top of an open door (OK, this I've never seen before!). It also deals with the stress they get from moving to a new place. It also gets into some of John's personal struggles with surgeries, moving and the like. Speaking of cats–if you're anywhere near Thrillhouse Records they have some rad kitty buttons that Courtney from Quaaludes made—they'll go great with this zine! (Justin)
P.O. Box 142, South Beloit, IL 61080

THE MATCH #114
$5 / 76 pgs
Curmudgeonly-er than I remember since my last reading. As one of the US's oldest anarchist rags (since '69) I was sort of surprised to find Islamophobia and anti-"political correctness" in the first few pages—it made me feel like tossing it aside. Must be a generational thing. Also in the first few pages, this self-proclaimed car driver complains about bikers and bike culture! WTF! He's also anti-poetry. Hey Fred, live a little, man! However, this is still an entertaining read. Very opinionated in a didactic way and very thorough ranting, which sounds bad probably but is actually awesome if you like a good turn of phrase like I certainly do. So much cop-hating and anti authority-ness. It feels a lot like hanging out with your average paranoid hippie (my point of reference: I'm .07 miles from Berkeley as I write this) as he holds court over topics such as smart meters (quite an axe to grind), surveillance, crap detection, mainstream media, corporations, the government, police brutality, and so on. Came in an envelope with a letter-pressed return address. Fancy. (JB)
PO Box 3012, Tucson, AZ 85702

NOT LIKE YOU #4
$4 / 40 pgs
This zine primarily consists of interviews with Since We Were Kids, Burn, Praise, Ian MacKaye (part one of two), Backtrack, a short record reviews section that happens to have a lot of old hardcore bands' new records—which get positive reviews—or recent reissues of old bands' demos or live sets or other rarities. The writing is enthusiastic yet very average, and the interviews read like informed conversations. The Ian one was by far the best, and I'm glad the interviewer didn't embarrass himself by broaching the topic of *you know what*, but none of the rest are particularly insightful or talk about anything that I really care about (Preview: duder from Burn is into spirituality, and duder from Praise can't understand why anyone would "knowingly participate in consumption of factory farmed animal products in 2015"), and the Backtrack one is functionally an extended onesheet. The layout is all text with pixelated pictures, and the lyrics to "Intense Energy" are printed on the back cover in some goofball font. There you go. (DG)
notlikeyourecords.com

NOT SHIT #1
$5.50 ppd, $0-5 sliding scale for pdf / 44 pgs
Zine of the month right here! If you are a fan of punk, skating, and cool girls (and how could you not be a maniac for all three?!) send off for this immediately. This is everything a fanzine should be, a joyful celebration of DIY culture. Just the other day, I was saying that so many people seem reluctant to be enthusiastic about things. Chelsey loves skating and she isn't afraid to celebrate it. And celebrate it she does; there are interviews and submissions from other cool skater girls (and one skater boy!), skate riddles, skate advice, skate photos, skate drawings, skate comics, a conversation with a legit great contemporary skate punk band! The whole thing looks incredible—an actual cut'n'paste, photocopied layout, not a photoshop facsimile of one, that purely punk aesthetic that most boys with a typewriter attempt and fail. No pose here! My roommate just caught me skating around the garage to a Nickiafter reading this and I'm tempted to abandon the magazine (we go to print in just a few hours!) and skate to the beach instead of doing my job. Much like my electric guitar, I've lugged a skateboard around from punk house to punk house for half a decade, but been too self-conscious to use it. 2015 is the year all that changed. This is a fanzine for anyone who has an interest in skating, whether you ride every day or have never set foot on a board. It's inspiring me to take myself outta the garage and into the wild, find a cool girl crew and destroy mainstream capitalistic skate culture and the patriarchy while looking cool as fuck. Skate for fun or not at all! I'm getting my submission together for issue #2 right now. (GA)
notshitmagazine@gmail.com

OSLO CITY ROCKERS #1
$9.70, 79 NOK / 74 pgs
I knew this was gonna be a great zine as it had a punkified version of "Angry Baby" (from Oslo's Vigeland park) on the cover. The name of this zine is an update on *City Rockers*, a 1978 publication that covered the likes of the Damned, Lurkers, etc but no Norsk punk—which is odd as Borres Kork had to have been starting to make a racket by then. There's an astounding 36 bands here and, true to their name, all punk/HC/post-punk bands from the Tiger City of Norway. There's a repeated question in each interview but it's a good one. Namely, Mr. Mokk and Kaluza ask "What would you like to change in Oslo?" It helps underscore the urban issues in a city and country that are accustomed to a very high standard of living. Yet, like a lot of places they're also dealing with gentrification and more policies friendly to the richest people of Oslo. A lot of this is discussed in great detail in the interview with Bouvet and more directly with the oddly named anarchist band the Christians, who mention the crappy treatment of the homeless and immigrants. Some of the other bands of note in here are: Dark Times, Pox, Evig Elskov, Next Life, Jenkem Warriors, and Terrorstat. I also thought it was really cool that Next Life was featured since they have a Vietnamese-Norwegian guy in the band and their experiences are not told enough in Norway. (On a personal note: while



visiting Norway I can met a lot of people of varied ethnic backgrounds who were local to Oslo so that was really interesting and good to see.) I also had a good laugh at Strukturell Vold ("Structural Violence") who say, "We want to kill all the landlords, bomb the barcode, lynch our right wing government." Plus, it's really good as the bands often mention DIY/punk venues that are not just Blitz House (which is the only place I knew about going in to reading this). Lest I forget, *Oslo City Rockers* has a connection to the equally excellent Norsk zine *Words Upon Words*. So if you wanna learn about the current Norwegian scene and make some connections over there, pick this up. (JD)
oslocityrockers@gmail.com

PENIS HIDER
$1 / 12 pgs
Every freak I know has a story about being hassled by some fucker. Mitigating factors about outward presentation, perceived gender, fashion choices, bad luck, race, and how gay someone appears to be make these kinds of attention differ from freak to freak but fuck, man, we all got a shit-ton of stories. Needless to say this kind of attention is fucking painful most of the time. The real freaks get the humor in these stupid interactions and that's where *Penis Hider* comes in. Denise chronicles these dumb-as-fuck men she encounters in bars, waiting for the train, on bus trips, and standing on the goddamn street just trying to have a fucking cigarette. These stories are lent the gift of illustration by her friend Evan's dark scratch comic styles and are illuminated. A brief comic zine for relief from the shit pile. (EC)
devouryenz@gmail.com

POSITIVE CREED #26
£2 / 24 pgs
Another good issue of this UK zine that covers metal, punk, post-punk and hardcore bands of the present and past. First off, there's a neat interview with current Cornish crossover-punks Rash Decision (gonna have to add this band to one of my fave new-to-me bands of 2015!). Rash Decision also have really rad designs with mean lookin' seagulls on them. There's a good write-up on Richie Edwards from Manic Street Preachers who I put in the "read about them/don't know the music" area. But I know some of my UK punk and metal friends in the UK think they're top-notch. I honestly didn't expect to see Cerebral Fix who, like a ton of other bands, are now back together. I wanna root for them and check them out more as they got lost my early '90s pursuit of UK grind and death metal. Plus, it's interesting to read that they were treated much better by Roadrunner than Earache. Hell, this is the mostly lengthy interview with Cerebral Fix I've ever seen. And now listening back *Life Sucks*... LP sounds like a rawer, more metallized version of Crumbsuckers. Nowt wrong with that now, innit? Athletico Spizz 80/PiL guitarist Lu Edmonds also is featured in here and talks about his work with the late, great Kirsty MacColl and his work with the Turkish instrument, the saz. Their music review section—while only about a page and a half—covers a lot of punk acts I've never heard of. Finally, there's a nice and long-ish interview with anarcho punks Flowers in the Dustbin which covers the band's beginnings and recordings as well as Gerard's book on Crass. Also comes with a 22-track compilation CD reviewed elsewhere in this here mag you got in your hands. (Justin)
P.O. Box 777, EX1 9TU, Exeter, ENGLAND

PSIONIC PLASTIC JOY #18
$2 US, $3 world / 30 pgs
A rather different zine to what I'm used to seeing come through at *MRR*, this Xeroxed, cut-n-paste zine is subtitled "A journal of love, friendship, & nihilism" but I will alter it for you, for review reasons, and say it could be "A journey into the world of Neo-neoism, mail art, analog resistance, grisly murder and system annihilation." In this edition you can read about the internal mental and creative process of a mail artist ("About the collages, I'm filling them with personal symbols, personal hopes and dreams as way to [sic] make them exist in the physical"), some captivating if not slightly unnerving passages about E-bombs and murder-by-pen ("the pen is mightier than the sword, if you are willing to follow through"), anti-social media poetry, reader letters and a list of the two dozen or so contributors. Also, detailed collages, grainy pictures of Duchamp and Burroughs, guest artwork appearances, a true story written by a criminal psychologist whose thesis study investigated serial killers, and a rather "academic" piece about the concept of origin and how "'post-modernity' is the conscious suppression of any awareness of origins, any lingering hopes of originary thinking," a poignant eight-page article that I'm still trying to wrap my head around. It's worth picking up this zine if you, like me, are into critical analysis, philosophy lite and grave new world ponderings, mixed with the appropriate amount of paranoia and NWO suspicion. The back page catchphrase sums up the notions within pretty well: "You have machines in your head." Indeed we do. "Welcome, my son, to the machine." (LA)
"Fuck e-mail. Write a letter" / Jason Rodgers, PO Box 10894, Albany, NY 12201

SHELF LIFE #2
$5 plus shipping / 44 pgs
Here we have some reviews of books, bookshops in small towns, library sales, and book hunting in general by two bibliophiles, with the theme of nostalgia. These are serious book bin diggers. The descriptions of scores versus empty-handed reckonings are impassioned. Peppered with photos and illustrations for a quaint, friendly feel. Weird narrative in third person but occasional breaking out to second(ish?) and each of the two editors drops in for a intimation here and there. The nostalgia aspect lends well to the reviewing, as a memory, for example, of a bookstore in an old beautiful house gives the author a measure for traditional shops he visits. The whole thing is a bit cute but I think other dedicated book lovers will swoon for this. (JB)
studiumpunctumshop@gmail.com

SLINGSHOT #118
$1 ppd / 20 pgs
I have read *Slingshot* for a major chunk of my life and it has always challenged me in ways that I may not be able to describe in words. It has always left me with questions and sometimes these questions leave me wondering whether the answers are necessary in order appreciate the production of this publication. In this issue, there was a focus on race that I had never really encountered in *Slingshot* before. There was an article by a person of color who was being referred to as white and it made me think a lot about representation and more deeply about colorism. I am grateful to *Slingshot* and its writers for this issue and for giving more space for folks of color and the contemporary issues surrounding us (authenticity, Black lives matter, and white accountability). (OG)
3125 Shattuck Ave, Berkeley CA 94705

THE TROUBLE WITH NORMAL #131
$4 ppd / 20 pgs
I had to do a double take when I found out this zine was at issue #131. It's rare to find any zine that has lasted this long and somehow Boone from *The Trouble With Normal* has found the energy to regularly put out this publication that covers a wide range of shows and records. There were a couple of show reviews that weren't anything too special. There's a story-telling narrative that can go either way here—the show can either sound really exciting or super dull and for me, this went the latter. An interview with Disparo! and some record reviews just weren't enough to win me over on this one. If you know me, I'm a format and design freak (even though I don't know anything about either, I know what looks good) and the Microsoft Word-ish layout of this just didn't cut it. For issue #131, there must be something that pulls people back. (OG)
P.O Box 1444, Columbia, MO 65205-1444 / ttwn@hotmail.com

YOU POSE BUT WHY #2
$5 / 34 pgs
The interviews here are the undisputable highlight of *You Pose But Why?*'s second issue, which splits its focus between international grind and domestic life. Pakistan's Multinational Corporations, Turkey's Sakatat, and Japan's Sete Star Sept all offer incisive takes on the histories of their respective scenes, though sadly none of them are on the tape accompanying this issue (Sete Star Sept were already on the flexi paired with issue #1). Now, I don't listen to much grindcore (*but why*?), but I got a lot from reading each of these interviews. It's a fascinating, well-informed and reflective group of people that Dom and the Pan Del Muerte brought together for this issue. The layouts and photos are also great. I know even less about fatherhood than I do about grindcore, but I still found the "Undisputed Daditude" column here pretty cute. There're a couple recipes in here under the Grindcore Gourmand (!) section—as a born-and-raised San Franciscan I should already know how to get a sourdough starter going, but I'm not too proud to let the Rockford, IL crew teach me how. Experimentation, open-mindedness and rigorous analysis are encouraged throughout, whether we're talking about tapes, ethical animal consumption or pre-fermentation. No one in the house is in the mood for me to put on a grindcore comp right now (it's before 5pm) and none of the reviewer stations have a working tape deck, so I had to listen to the accompanying tape in my car on the way to work. CSMD are the soundtrack to my very own personal torment (at least three covers of television themes), but Sdum Minut Strachu, MDFL and the Lowest Animal are all pretty tight though. Also features six pages of record reviews. Stay grind, fuck Scion. (EW)
pandelmuerterecs.storenvy.com / Dominic Romano, 1413 Labelle Ave, Rockford, IL 61101

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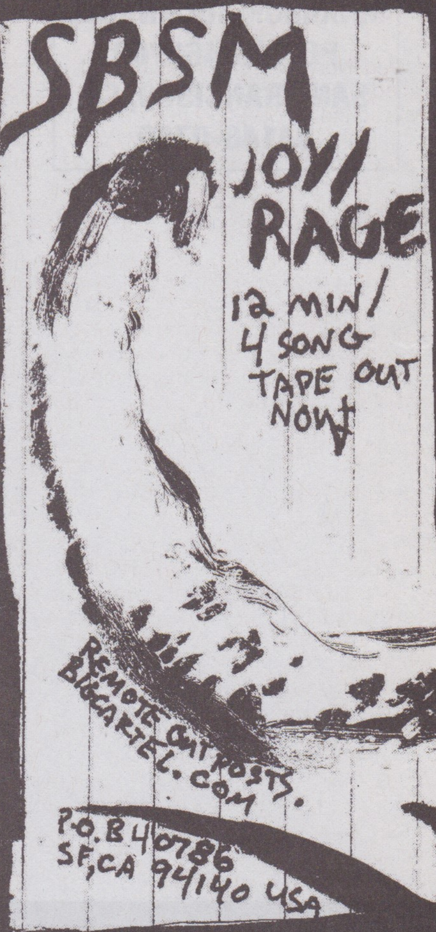

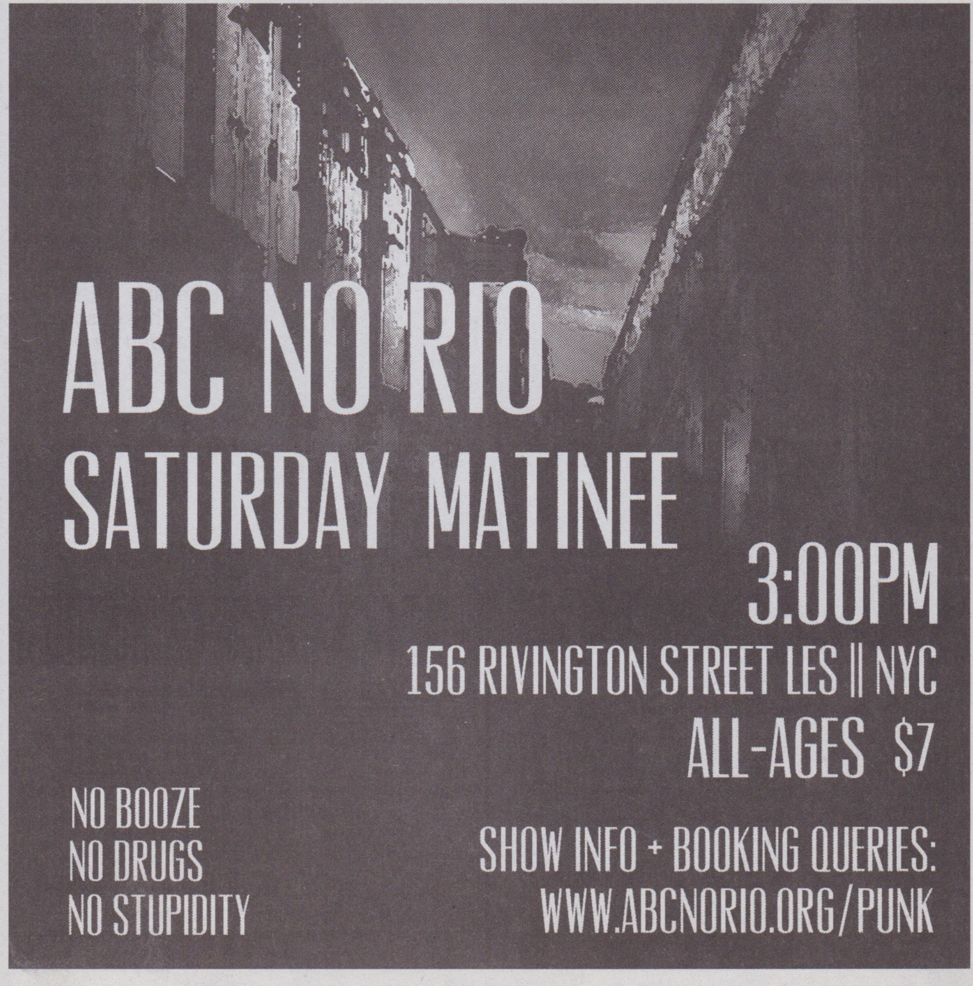

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